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DESPATCHES

FROM PARIS

1784-1790

S.B 19838

DESPATCHES
FROM PARIS
1784-1790

SELECTED AND EDITED FROM THE
FOREIGN OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE
BY

OSCAR BROWNING
M.A., V-P. R. Hist. S.

VOLUME I
(1784-1787)

CAMDEN THIRD SERIES
VOL. XVI.

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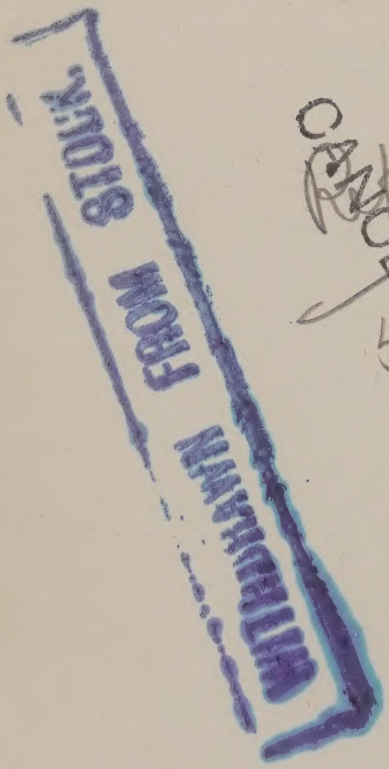

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PREFATORY NOTE.

Owing to the serious illness of the Editor, Mr. Oscar Browning, during the preparation of this edition, the Council have decided, with his approval, to issue the text of these important official despatches of the Duke of Dorset and other British Ministers at Paris from 1784 to 1787 in the present volume, leaving an Introduction and Index to the whole work to appear in the second Volume (now in the press) covering the period from January 1788 to May 1790. It will be recalled that the Paris despatches from June 1790 to August 1792 have been edited by Mr. Browning for the Cambridge University Press (1885).

H.-H.

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ERRATA

The following heavy list of *errata* for a certain portion of the text was unavoidable owing to the discovery, after the first sheets for the year 1786 had been distributed, that the transcripts, which were known to be reliable, had been occasionally paraphrased by the typist. As soon as this discovery was made the remainder of the proofs and copy were collated with the MSS.

P. 93, l. 8. *For* 'can be easily', *read* 'can easily be'.
94, 23. *Before* 'good' *insert* 'natural'.
95, 4. *For* 'at present communicate', *read* 'now communicate'.
After article 2 insert article 3 *as follows :*
"Some of the goods that are prohibited coming from England are admitted to pay a duty when coming from other countries."
And number on articles 3, 4 *and* 5.
27. *For* 'upon', *read* 'on'.
29. *For* 'are', *read* 'have been'.
96, 10. *Before* 'recommended' *insert* 'so strongly'.
11. *Before* 'which' *insert* 'and'.
14. *For* 'furnish them to the amount', *read* 'furnish him with the amount'.
19. *For* 'condemned', *read* 'tried'.
23. *For* 'by M. le Maitre', *read* 'by le Maitre'.
97, 3. *Before* 'orders' *insert* 'positive'.
For 'return to their own province', *read* 'return to that province'.
98, 5. *For* 'produce', *read* 'induce'.
8. *For* 'the subject', *read* 'this subject'.
For 'fail', *read* 'hesitate'.
12. *Before* 'remonstrance' *insert* 'a'.

P. 98, l. 16. *Before* 'he will maintain' *insert* 'that'.
99, 17. *For* 'at present', *read* 'for the present'.
30. *For* 'service', *read* 'advantage'.
34. *For* 'will', *read* 'would'.
100, 21. *For* 'to the government', *read* 'to government'.
101, 1. *After* 'contemplation', *supply asterisks.*
4. *For* 'it is said that the', *read* 'it is said the'.
15. *For* 'hearing', *read* 'rehearing'.
26. *For* 'granted to him', *read* 'granted him'.
29. *Same as l. 26.*
32. *Before* 'his project' *insert* 'he had declared his intention of offering'.
33. *Supply asterisks.*
102, 12. *Before* 'personal' *insert* 'great'.
16. *Supply asterisks.*
19. *For* 'the last', *read* 'these last'.
22. *For* 'upon', *read* 'on'.
27. *Before* 'confront' *omit* 'to'.
104, 11. *Before* 'I am' *omit* 'that'.
12. *Supply asterisks.*
21. *For* 'related' *read* 'relative'.
28. *Supply asterisks.*
106, 11. *Before* 'I shall not', *omit* 'that'.
107. 5. *For* 'appeal', *read* 'appear'.
13. *For* 'audience', *read* 'audiences'.
27. *Read* 'but not any other of the'.
108, 2. *For* 'at the present moment', *read* 'at this moment'.
7. *Read* 'King of Spain'.
108, 14. *For* 'justified', *read* 'disposed'.
29. *Supply asterisks.*
109, 9. *Before* 'in case' *insert* 'that'.
110, 3. *Read* 'ready drawn for the'.
4 and 6. *Read* 'M. de Fer'.
15. *Read* 'he hoped that His Majesty'.
27. *For* 'Ministers', *read* 'Minister'.
111, 19. *Read* 'two last seasons, and tho' a'.
24. *Before* 'in commission' *omit* 'is'.
25. *Read* 'and which might be fitted out'.
32. *Read* 'without being stopped for examination'.

P. 112, l. 12-13. *Read* 'so commodious a harbour'.
18. *Read* 'I send your Lordship the Cardinal de Rohans' petition'.
114, 7. *Read* 'at the same time to be issued'.
8. *For* 'the', *read* 'this'.
29. *For* 'formally', *read* 'finally'.
115, 4. *Read* 'to which'.
7. *Read* 'Cagliostro likewise is'.
11. *Read* 'one of several proofs'.
116, 6. *Read* 'you then'.
13. *Read* 'I was assured..... that'.
21. *Read* 'the advantages of the situation'.
24. *Read* 'I doubt not but your Lordship'.
117, 3. *Before* 'no more' *omit* 'for'.
Read 'this journey'.
15. *Before* 'been done', *omit* 'already'.
21. *Read* 'duration of the peace'.
27. *Read* 'the whole number of the'.
30. *Read* '1200 to 1600'.
35. *For* 'speculators', *read* 'speculations'.
118, 6. *Read* 'upon this occasion'.
10. *Read* 'the infliction of this punishment which'.
12. *Read* 'public begin now'.
20. *Read* 'stain upon'.
29. *Read* 'that have induced'.
33. *Read* 'Edict that entirely conforms'.
119, 36. *Read* 'an account of some disagreement'.
120, 4. *Read* 'right of disposal'.
6. *For* 'account', *read* 'detail'.
10. *Read* 'all we know here'.
15. *Read* 'have thought proper'.
18. *For* 'the King', *read* 'the Court'.
22. *Read* 'have been left dry'.
26. *For* 'letter', *read* 'letters'.
32. *Read* 'province'.
33. *Before* 'the intentions', *insert* 'into'.
121, 9. *For* 'standing by', *read* 'adhering to'.
16. *Read* 'end of this month'.
19. *Read* 'Parliament of 1774'.

P. 121, l. 20. *Read* 'conformity to English law'.
29-30. *Read* 'great benefit, in all probability, will be derived'.
31. *Read* 'America'.
122, 2. *For* 'debtors', *read* 'creditors'.
10. *Read* 'he never can be brought'.
12. *After* 'plan', *supply asterisks.*
14. *Read* 'upon the ground'.
17. *For* 'act', *read* 'instance'.
29. *Read* 'for its accession'.
33-34. *Read* 'backward and forward'.
123, 30. *For* '12th', *read* '13th'.
124, 8. *After* 'misinterpretation', *supply asterisks.*
11. *Read* 'he finds it to be not an official'.
13. *For* 'had', *read* 'has'.
15. *For* 'men', *read* 'sailors'.
125, 12. *For* 'upon', *read* 'on'.
17. *For* 'becoming', *read* 'become'.
26. *Read* 'a very short time ago'.
32. *For* '15th', *read* '16th'.
33. *For* 'discovery', *read* 'discoveries'.
126, 16. *Before* 'letter', *insert* 'last'.
21. *Read* 'have been always'.
127, 3-4. *Read* 'attachment of his Swedish Majesty'
21. *Read* 'is to take place'.
128, 12. *For* 'fully', *read* 'expressly'.
25. *Read* 'had been so naturally'.
129, 2. *Before* 'more', *insert* 'still'.
6. *Read* 'the dupe of their northern ally'.
11. *Read* 'solicitous and inquisitive'.
12. *Read* 'recently received here'.
13. *Read* 'account of a force of the English Company'.
130, 21. *Before* 'it', *omit* 'and'.
For 'the most', *read* 'a'.
26. *Before* 'would', *insert* 'I have reason to think'.
Read 'French interest in India from'.
29. *Before* 'I have had', *insert* 'that'.
131, 6. *Read* 'Minister of the Marine'.
7. *Read* 'there is at this time in Paris a person'.
15. *For* 'Mr. Boltz', *read* 'Boltz'.

P. 131, l. 24. *Read* 'in India and in England'.
28. *For* 'frontier', *read* 'frontiers'.
30. *For* 'until', *read* 'till'.
34. *For* 'its', *read* 'the'.
35. *Read* 'is ceded for ever'.
132, 6. *For* 'has', *read* 'have'.
24. *Read* 'to this Court'.
30. *Before* 'continues', *omit* 'still'.
133, 4. *For* 'in', *read* 'at'.
6. *For* 'presumed', *read* 'esteemed'.
7. *Before* 'of that part', *insert* 'of the present state'.
9. *Read* 'in which'.
12. *Read* 'interviews'.
13. *For* 'totally', *read* 'directly'.
135, 21-22. *Read* 'M. d'Esterno (M. de Vergenne's relation)'.
160, *n.* *For* 'repeated' *read* 'repealed'.
257, *n.* *Read* 'Court of Berlin'.
261, l. 24. *Read* 'This loan, notwithstanding'.

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DESPATCHES FROM PARIS

JAN.-DEC. 1784

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1784

1. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN.
23 January 1784.

We are, as yet, very much unsettled in every respect, and cannot expect indeed to be otherwise till something conclusive passes in England. The only news I have to send you from this place at present is the institution of an American Order called the Order of Cincinnatus.[1] It has been sent over to some of the French officers who distinguished themselves the most in defence of American Liberty, to M. de la Fayette, Monsr. de Lauzun, &c. It is a Blue Ribband, with a golden Eagle ennameled hanging to it, and worn at the buttonhole: the Motto on one side is, Omnia reliquit servare Rempublicam : and on the reverse, Societas Cincinnatoria, and some other words, for which a boy of ten years old would have been flogged at Eton or Westminster.

2. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
22 February 1784.

I have seen M. de Vergennes... who assured me that, as it was the sincere wish of the French Court to keep up the most perfect good understanding with that of Great Britain, and to do everything that might tend to a lasting Peace, instructions had been sent to Monsr. D'Adhemar, at the very time of my application, to

[1] The order of Cincinnatus was founded in America, in 1783, for those who had fought for American Independence by land or sea. It consisted of a medal, with an American Eagle on one side, and on the other a representation of Cincinnatus leaving the plough for the army. It was at first intended to be hereditary. It was abolished by Washington after he became President.

obtain an official account of the naval establishment intended to be kept up by the English in the East Indies... I understand that Monsr. de Suffrein [1] is on his way home, and very shortly expected to arrive.

3. Dorset to Carmarthen, 18 March 1784.

I took the earliest opportunity of speaking to them both (the Dutch Ambassadors) on the subject (the complaint of Commodore King) ; and in order that they might be fully acquainted with the nature of the grievance, I left in the hands of Mr Brantzen the extract of the letter your Lordship did me the honour to transmit to me. (There follows a correspondence between Mr Brantzen and the Duke of Dorset).

Upon my requiring to be informed by the Dutch Ambassadors of the destination of their Squadron in the Mediterranean, I was assured by them, that however hostile the appearance of such an armament might be, nothing else was intended by it but the exercise and formation of their seamen ; that, large supplies having been voted by the States for their Fleet before the conclusion of the peace, it was thought necessary (in compliance with the prejudice of the common people) to keep it at sea till those supplies should be expended. How far it may be safe to rely on these assurances, I leave to your Lordship to determine ; but, however unsatisfactory they may appear, I have not been able to procure any intelligence that is in any wise repugnant to them.

4. Dorset to Carmarthen, 26 February 1784.

...I have been particularly attentive to the subject of your Lordship's dispatch (no 5) and have in consequence discovered that a proposal for a treaty of Alliance between France and Holland is

[1] Pierre Andre Bailli de Suffrein de Saint Tropez. Son of the Marquis de Saint Tropez, born 1768, killed in a duel at Versailles, 1788.

now in agitation, and that the Province of Utrecht has offered a plan to that effect, but that the other provinces had not come to any resolutions upon the matter.

I have reasons for thinking my intelligence on this head authentic, and am therefore inclined to believe that transactions of an alarming nature, and materially affecting the interests of Great Britain are carrying on between France and the States-General ; on this consideration I cannot but wish that your Lordship would send me as soon as may be directions for signing the definitive treaty with Holland, that Mr Brantzen may no longer have that pretence for continuing at this Court.

There is also a report that the French are about to send six regiments to India by way of Holland, to be transported from thence in Dutch bottoms : I mention this to your Lordship as having been communicated to me in the way of conjecture only ; yet, as it seems to tally so much with the other accounts, I think it right to offer it as an object of your Lordship's future attention.

5. Dorset to Carmarthen, 1 April 1784.

...I have just been informed of the treaty between England and the United States : it took place at Annapolis on the 14th January.

The Dutch fleet has suffered very much in the Mediterranean. One ship is lost, and another was entirely dismasted, and the whole was obliged to go into Toulon to refit.

6. Hailes[1] to Carmarthen, 21 April 1784.

I have already spoken to Mr de Brantzen, and desired an interview with him and Monsieur de Berkenroode...

[1] On 9 April 1784, Mr. Hailes was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary, during the absence in England of the Duke of Dorset on private affairs...

7. Hailes to Carmarthen, 22 April 1784.

Messieurs de Berkenroode and de Brantzen... having desired me to put into their hands a Note Ministerielle for them to transmit to the States General, I told them what your Lordship recommended to me in your dispatch, and was informed... that early in the next week they would name a day to enter on the business... I shall be much obliged to your Lordship to give orders for sending me whatever papers may be in your office, relative to the Preliminary Articles, and at the same time to furnish me with instructions.

8. Hailes to Carmarthen. 28 April 1784.

I have just learnt that Monsieur de Choiseul Gouffier [1], some time since appointed Ambassador to Constantinople, is to sail with a ship of the Line, two Frigates, and several Hebecques, about the middle of next month ; but as such an equipment for an Ambassador is unprecedented, there is every reason to suspect that it is a pretext, and that in fact it has a different destination. What this destination may prove, I cannot pretend to say. But, as it is known to have an Eastern direction, I have thought it advisable to write to Sir Robt. Ainslie [2] to put him on his guard, in order that he may endeavour to obtain the fullest information possible respecting it. I have no reason to doubt the authenticity of this intelligence, as I have it from two different Persons whose accounts agree circumstantially.

If your Lordship will allow me to hazard a conjecture, it appears probable to me that the plan of the French Cabinet is to establish a with India by the communication way of Alexandria, Suez, and

[1] Choiseul Gouffier. Marie Gabriel Florent Auguste, Comte de, born 1752 died 1817. A distinguished archaeologist and an intimate friend of Talleyrand. As ambassador to Constantinople he endeavoured to introduce European civilization iuto Turkey. He lived in Russia from 1792 to 1802.

[2] Ainslie. Sir Robert, ambassador to Constantinople 1776-1792. A collector of ancient Eastern and South African coins, died in 1822.

the Red Sea ; and that the good offices of mediation between Russia and the Porte have been paid by the latter with the Island of Candia, which is conveniently situated in the same line of communication from the Meditteranean.

Should the intelligence prove true, it may serve as a criterion for the measure of credit to be given to every other report of the unfriendly intentions of France towards us in the East.

9. Hailes to Carmarthen
30 April 1784.

I have... to report the event of a conference appointed some days since by Monsr. de Brantzen.

Monsr. de Brantzen said there were three points he wished to be considered by the Court of London before the signing the Definitive Treaty ; the first of which related to the cession of Negatpatnam.

During the negotiation of the Preliminary Articles, he said he had observed to the Duke of Manchester that it was necessary that some boundary should be prescribed to the dependencies of that place, and that it was not intended to cede the circumjacent territory, which had been acquired by the Dutch at a different time in a different manner, and was considerable on account of the number of villages it contained : however as the Duke of Manchester declared, he had no instructions upon that head at that time, and as they were much pressed to sign the articles, the matter was referred to a future discussion. Monsr. de Brantzen said he was much surprized that I had neither seen in the Duke's correspondence any note of this circumstance nor ever heard it mentioned.

The second point relates to a reciprocal demand made by the Dutch for the security of their commerce, in consequence of our stipulation for a free navigation in the Indian Seas. He said that Mr. Fitzherbert had offered it, and in the same manner, and as fully as that agreed on for the security of the French in their Treaty. Monsr. de Brantzen expressed also much surprize that I should have been unacquainted, as I professed myself to be, with this circumstance. The third point, which he treated indeed as if he thought it not

very material but of which he desired to be informed, was whether His Majesty acknowledged or not, in this pacification, the mediation of the Emperor and the Empress of Russia. I took all this ad referendum, and promised as early an answer as possible, after I should have informed your Lordship of what had passed, and should have received your instructions. Monsr. de Brantzen, however, said, and I believe there is no apprehension of his not abiding by it, that it was not his intention either to protract the business, or to enter into any farther discussions ; that it appeared to him high time to conclude, and that he would sooner give up the points he recommended to the consideration of my Court, and agree to an immediate conversion of the Preliminary Articles into a Definitive Treaty, as at first proposed, than occasion any new delay.

10. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
7 May 1784.

After expressing an anticipation of an early conclusion of the Treaty, the Dispatch continues :

I am the more inclined to concur in wishing that this business may be speedily concluded, as I find Monsr. de Vauguyon[1] to returned to Holland, although no longer Ambassador there ; his intentions, I believe, are to muster the forces of his Party, and prepare them for the reception of Monsr. de Verac. It is impossible not to feel how much His Majesty's Interests must suffer in Holland from the want of some able and active Person to counteract the assiduity of French intrigue. I understand that M. de Baratinskoy will shortly leave Paris, and as he is a man much attached to the French interest, of course he will be regretted. Monsr. de Simolin, I have reason to believe, from what I have heard Quelen say, will be by no means a welcome successor.

11. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN.
20 May 1784.

...With regard to what your Lordship recommended in your Dispatch (no 8), I have to acquaint you that, in the course of conver-

[1] Paul François de Quelen, de Stuer, de Caussade, Duc de Vauguyon (1746-1828), Ambassador in Holland 1776, removed to Madrid 1784, Minister of Foreign Affairs 1789.

sation last Tuesday, with Monsr. de Rayneval[1] I endeavoured to obtain some insight into the views of the French Ministry with respect to the Treaty of Commerce. I feign'd to be ignorant even of his being the Commissary on the part of France, as well as of the nomination of Mr Crauford, and ask'd him in a familiar way if he had heard what were the objects desired by them. He told me without disguise that the wish of the French Ministry was to establish their trade with England on the broadest basis possible, and to open all their Ports, but, that being ignorant of the intentions of England, it was not possible, before things came into discussion, to form any judgement of what was to be granted or what was to be expected. I had heard indeed before that the most liberal system was what they wish'd for. If in the course of enquiry I should be able to obtain any further information from commercial people respecting the wishes of France I will not fail to transmit it to your Lordship.

12. Hailes to Carmarthen
25 May 1784.

The more enquiries I have made in order to obtain an insight into the Commercial views of the French Ministry, the more I am confirmed in my opinion that they are at present without a plan. M. de Vergennes,[2] I know, has applied to the different departments of Finance and Commerce, but the result of his consultations has not rendered him more competent to the business, and I am assured that as long as he continues ignorant of our inclinations, he must remain without any views to the attainment of particular objects.

I cannot help taking the liberty of observing to your Lordship, that the new intended regulations of the Revenue of England, so necessary in other respects, are likely to have an effect of consider-

[1] Rayneval, Joseph Mathias Gerard de (1746-1822). He was for twenty years premier commis at the French Foreign Office. He was a writer on International Law.

[2] Vergennes, Charles Gravier Comte de. He was born in 1717 and was Minister of Foreign Affairs under Louis XVI from 1774 to his death in 1787. He was a free trader.

able disadvantage in our Commercial Negotiations here. There are, I should think, many points on which the French Minister would relax, as long as the fraudulent introduction of French Goods into England should appear likely to continue unrestrained, but when he sees that the Revenue Laws are about to be amended, and put in force, and that no benefit will be derived from the illicit Trade that has been so long carried on, I am apt to think that great difficulties will present themselves. Had it been possible to keep these new intended regulations a Secret, and suspend them till after the Treaty of Commerce should have been concluded, perhaps we should have negotiated to very considerable advantage.

13. Hailes to Carmarthen, 3 June 1784.

After dealing at considerable length with the irregularities of form in the Definitive Treaty, the Dispatch continues :

...I believe I may venture to assure your Lordship that there is no probability whatever of Monsieur de Suffrein returning to India at this time... but should he be prevailed upon hereafter to return to India... your Lordship may depend on my not failing to inform you of it. The intelligence... respecting Monsr. de Choiseul Gouffier is perfectly true, and he will leave Toulon early in this month for Constantinople. Monsieur de la Vauguyon is returned from Holland. The Dauphin[1] remains extremely ill, and his danger is much greater than those who are about the court are disposed to allow. The King of Sweden is expected to be here in about ten days.

14. Hailes to Carmarthen 7 June 1784.

...I have the satisfaction to acquaint your Lordship that I did not find M. de Merci at all mysterious on the subject of the Emperor's claims and views with respect to Holland; and I had hardly expressed a desire of being acquainted with the true nature and state of them, before he took me aside and began to explain the business

[1] Louis Joseph, who died in 1789.

without any appearance of reserve. He said that ever since the cession of the Forts Lieffenshook and Lillo by the Treaty of Westphalia, the Dutch had been encroaching on the surrounding territory, and enlarging the bounds originally preserved to them, by a variety of stratagems and unfair means, that when owners of the neighbouring lands refused to part with them at their price, they gave them to understand that they had that in their power which would bring them to terms, and even went so far as to threaten that they would lay them under water by means of their sluices, if they continued refractory. As many were induced from these and similar practises to part with their possessions in the neighbourhood, an increase of Territory, very alarming to His Imperial Majesty, began to be made by the Dutch to their Forts ; and he has therefore, after finding that representations and remonstrances have proved ineffectual, been at last oblig'd to have recourse to that method of righting himself which has given so much alarm to the Republic.

With regard to Maestricht, M. de Merci said, what Your Lordship is no doubt acquainted with, namely that that town which was to remain in the hands of the Dutch by the Treaty of 1673 as a surety only for sums of money due to them at that time, was to be restored to the other contracting party as soon as these sums should be paid ; that those sums had been paid, and that His Imperial Majesty thinks himself now fully entitled to take possession, as his right is derived in the same manner as that by which he holds his other possessions in the Netherlands.

I did not neglect to hint, as your Lordship instructed me, the good disposition of my Court towards that of Vienna, in case of its having any Commerce plan in contemplation. This Monsr. de Merci took extremely well, but assured me he believed none was thought of, except with regard to the internal trade of the Low Countries, on account of which the free navigation of the Sheldt was made so particular an Object by His Imperial Majesty.

I own, my Lord, I am inclined to think, whatever may be the political connexion and joint views of the Houses of Bourbon and Austria in other respects, that the former has not been instrumental

or even privy to the designs of the latter on the Dutch ; and the more so as the Treaty now in agitation between France and that Republic is avowedly entered into for the security of the Dutch frontiers. I am also tempted to believe that the designs of the Emperor (encouraged as he has been by the distracted state of Holland) go however no farther than to lay his neighbours in that part under contribution, and that if the *compensation* can be agreed upon, he will not insist upon Maestricht or any other territorial sacrifice, excepting only the free navigation of the Scheld which I understand is a favourite object.

P.S. It is said that the King of Sweden[1] will arrive either today or tomorrow, which is earlier than was expected.

15. Hailes to Carmarthen.
10 June 1784.

I have seen Monsr. de Brantzen on the subject of the reduction of the Dutch Naval Force in India ; and that he confined himself to saying that he would immediately write to Holland to learn the intentions of the States respecting such a measure. From the best intelligence I have been able to procure I do not find that any hostile preparations are making in any of the ports of this country; and I am much inclined to hope that our apprehensions about India from this quarter will prove groundless. Some conversation which I have lately had with a very intelligent English gentleman, just arrived in one of M. de Suffrein's ships, confirms me in the opinion that it will not be possible for the French to do us any essential harm in that part of the world, unless such decided steps are taken by them as must be construed into an unequivocal declaration of going to war again... I have been told that M. de Suffrein not only does not mean to return to India, but intends quitting the Service... Nothing has transpired here concerning the French Treaty with the Dutch : it is said to be a Treaty of Alliance only, and not of Commerce, and tho' believed to be in great forwardness, none of the particular stipulations are known. Different reasons have been assigned for the Visit of the King of Sweden here, but the most likely are only the least probable. His stay will be about a fortnight...

[1] Gustavus III., 1771-1792.

16. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN
17 June 1784.

The conversation here turns chiefly on the expedition to Algiers, for which such large preparations have been made ; but it seems to be the general opinion that it will turn out little more advantageous for the invaders than that which was directed some years ago against Salee, and conducted by Mr O'Reilly.

The Maltese have lately added a considerable force to the Spanish Armament and above four-score Knights of that order have embarked.

17. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN.
1 July 1784.

... Monsr. de Vergennes enquired very earnestly respecting the arrival of Mr. Craufurd, and expressed his wish that no time should be lost in entering upon the Commercial Treaty between Britain and France ; He seemed to think one Commissioner on our part hardly sufficient, and, considering the very precarious state of Mr. Craufurd's health, I cannot help submitting to your Lordship's consideration whether he may not occasionally require assistance.

It is reported that the King of Sweden... is in treaty to cede Gottenburg to the French, in recompense for which it is said he is to have one of the French Islands in the West Indies, and to receive an annuity of £25,000 sterling. I cannot seriously give it as my own opinion that such a plan is really in agitation yet the possibility of a measure, wherein the commercial interests of England are so much concerned, is sufficient inducement for me to communicate to your Lordship what I have heard on that subject.

18. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN
8 July 1784.

I am aware that too much jealousy cannot be entertained with regard to the East Indies in particular, but the difficulty of concealing any preparations of force &c, in the present awakened state of Europe has hitherto led me to flatter myself that nothing

of the kind is to be apprehended. But... in the course of my conversation with Mons. de Vergennes, on Tuesday last, I took occasion to remark (but in the most friendly and confidential manner) the uneasiness created in England by the frequent reports of additional force being sent by France to the East Indies... M. de Vergennes assured me that if such fears did exist in England nothing could be more ill founded ; that there was no design of sending any troops with any other view than to garrison the present possessions of France ; that he had heard of the dissatisfaction in England about the army at Pondicherry, but complained that, in fact, there was no other place fit to receive them, and added that it was by no means a matter of choice that it remained there. In answer to what I urged about the connexion of the Dutch and the French in that quarter he said, if we had any apprehensions, that they were equally without grounds, and that the Settlements of the Dutch were much too far to the Eastward to be of any real advantage to the French. M. de Vergennes concluded with giving me the most solemn assurances that no ships of force were going to the East Indies, and that no preparations whatever were making in any of their Ports with such an intent. I must not omit to mention that... the subject of the St. Eustatius [1] claims was revived, and, as M. de Vergennes express'd himself with a good deal of warmth about it, I thought it right to say that the business of the present session of Parliament had taken up so much of the time of the Administration, that, in all probability, they had not had a fair opportunity of investigating the matter, but that I did not doubt but that in the course of the recess that it would be taken up, and carried through... I shall content myself with observing, that, as long as it remains unsettled, it will prove a constant stumbling block in all our lesser negotiations at this Court.

A variety of reasons have been assigned for the long and unex-

[1] Saint Eustatius. One of the smaller Antilles, between Saba and St. Kitt's. It was occupied by the Dutch in 1635, was taken several times by the French and English and restored to the Dutch in 1814. The portions of the correspondence which refer to the claims for Dutch property destroyed or confiscated by the English in the Island have been omitted in this transcript.

pected stay of the King of Sweden in this Capital. The whispers which have been circulated concerning the cession of Gottenburg, or some other Port of Sweden, to France have been occasioned by a negotiation which has certainly been carried on between that Monarch and the French Minister for the continuance of the subsidy so long paid to the Sovereign of that Country. The King, in order to forward his claim to the friendship and assistance of France, has held out the extraordinary sacrifices he makes in not uniting himself to Russia, from whom he pretends to receive the most advantageous and flattering proposals ; and, in order to give more colour to this pretence, the Russian Minister is the only one of all the Corps Diplomatique with whom he affects to communicate. There has, I believe, never been any intention of ceding Gottenburg to the French, but I have good reason to think that the liberty of building and fitting out ships of war in that or some other Port has really been offered ; but the terms with which the offer has been accompanied have not been acceded to by the French Minister. Besides the continuance of the Subsidy, the King required, in compensation for the privilege above mentioned, the cession of an Island in the West Indies, his desire being to enrich his Country by a fresh communication with that part of the World, by which means, he says, as a friend and ally to France he will be the better enabled to oppose the adverse views of Denmark. This policy, it is thought, appears to the French Minister rather too refined, or the advantages too far removed, and it has been said the King received only a bare promise of assistance in case he shall be found to be in want of it.

I have not been able to learn the progress that has been made in the Dutch and French Treaty ; however, it seems to be the general opinion here that it will meet with considerable difficulty. Monsr. de Brantzen staying here or returning to Holland will be a means of judging whether it does or does not take place.

Your Lordship, I believe, has been misinformed with regard to Prince Henry's visit to this capital. I am assured that the particular object of his journey is Switzerland. His intention, which I understand is directed by the King of Prussia, is not to come into France

at all, though it is not unlikely that he may be tempted to make an excursion from Geneva to Lyons, and from thence return into Germany by Strasburg and Nancy.

I am informed that M. de Horst, who has very considerable commercial engagements in his own country, is here on his own account, chiefly and particularly to settle the importation of Prussian Linens into the Port of Bordeaux, from whence they are intended for re-exportation to America. Whether this is a pretence to mask a commission of greater importance, or not, I cannot say ; it is all I have been able to learn...

I shall take care when anything material occurs to write to Sir Robert Keith...

19. Dorset to Carmarthen
15 July 1784.

I flatter myself that the last dispatch will have proved satisfactory. I have found nothing since that induces me to alter my opinion concerning those matters, but on the contrary am confirmed in that which I had formed concerning Prince Henry and M. de Horst, the former of whom does not come to Paris at all, and the latter is about to leave it.

The Landgrave of Hesse Cassel[1] has been at Paris these ten days but in the most perfect *incognito*. I have not been able to learn whether he has held any conferences with the Minister, but he does not see the King or any of the Royal Family. The Baron de Boden, his Minister here, says that he comes for his amusement merely, but will make a very short stay. Something has been said about his views of erecting his Landgraviate into an Electorate, and so far, (if there be any truth in such a report,) it is possible he may be come to solicit the support of the Minister here...

Monsieur de Choiseul Gouffier took leave a few days since, and is gone to embark at Toulon for Constantinople with only one ship of the Line : The Frigates and other Vessels, as I am inform'd,

[1] The Landgrave was Frederick II., who died in the following year. The country was not made an electorate till 1803.

having been countermanded. The King of Sweden leaves Paris on Sunday or Monday next.

20. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
22 July 1784.

I find no reason to alter my opinion concerning the general state of affairs at this Court since I last wrote to your Lordship. The answer of the Dutch to the Emperor is arrived here, and I am informed that it is nothing less than an absolute refusal to submit to the terms imposed by his Imperial Majesty in his reclamations. The counter-claims of the Dutch are said to be still greater than the Emperor's demands, and I understand that they are determined to undergo every danger and difficulty rather than agree to the opening of the Scheldt. There has however been no formal requisition made for that measure, and as it does not make one of the articles which have been discussed at Brussels, we shall hear nothing of it in the answer. It has been said here, but I know not with how much foundation, that the Empress of Russia has declared by her Minister at the Hague that she is fully convinced of the justice of the Emperor's pretensions.

Your Lordship will easily imagine that this unsettled state of affairs between His Imperial Majesty and the States must retard the conclusion of the Treaty between the latter Power and this Court ; and that tho' the principal stipulations are agreed upon, that is to say, as far as relate to the mutual defence of foreign Possessions, and the measure of force to be supplied by each Power in case of an attack on the other, and other subsidiary articles. France evidently discovers her pacific intentions by refusing to guarantee the European possessions of her Ally, as such a measure might so far embolden the Dutch as to make them set the Emperor at defiance, and consequently embroil her in their quarrel.

Everything tends to persuade me of the necessity by which this country is bound to remain in peace and the very deep wounds it has received in its Navy Commerce and Finance, can only be healed by delicate management and long repose. As a proof of

what I advance I need only mention the state of the principal Seaports; no less than a hundred and twenty bankruptcies have happened at Bordeaux since the war, and Shipping is fallen there 50 per cent. Since the month of November last not one American vessel has been seen in the harbour, nor have there been any demands whatever for exportation to the West Indies. Marseilles and other Ports in the South are in the same predicament, and a decline of trade and manufactures has been the consequence in all those circumjacent towns that formerly afforded the articles for exportation. The Caisse d'Escompte has recover'd a little from the shock sustained last year, but its credit is without foundation, and if it were not supported by acts of authority (which would prove ineffectual in all probability in case of a war) it must inevitably fall to the ground.

As fully persuaded as I am of the pacific intentions of France at this time, and the necessity of their continuance, I am not the less assured that their views are directed invariably to an increase of power in the East, to which quarter they look forward, as if it were to be the scene of future hostilities. The sending a man of Monsr. de Choiseul-Gouffier's reputation to Constantinople, and the importance attach'd to every mission and employment that has an Eastward direction fully convinces me that the Archipelago is intended for a line of communication with the East Indies.

The Duke of Wirtemberg is said to be supported by the Emperor in his claim to a ninth Electorate in opposition to the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, who has the suffrage of the King of Prussia.

The report of the Emperor's [1] having been unsuccessful in his endeavours to procure his nephew to be proclaim'd King of the Romans appears not likely, or rather it is not likely that he should have endeavour'd it at all; as should it have taken place, it would have invoked no less than an abdication on the part of the Grand Duke of all title to the Imperial Throne, to which his son would have succeeded in case of the death of the Emperor before his

[1] Emperor. The report was that Joseph wished his nephew Francis to be chosen King of the Romans in the place of his brother Leopold, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who actually succeeded him. Francis was born at Florence in 1768.

brother. Add to this that the election cannot be made of any Prince before the age of eighteen, and the Emperor's nephew is only sixteen years old.

The King of Sweden left Versailles on Tuesday morning, and no Treaty has been made or subsidy granted. It is said he will not make any stay on his road, but will go straight to Stockholm...

I beg leave to enclose to your Lordship a project M. de Vergennes has assur'd me he thinks will prove very beneficial if generally adopted. I shall make more enquiries about it and will inform you of the result of them.

21. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
29 July 1784.

... I resolved to apply to the Minister (M. de Vergennes) himself, to know upon what ground reports concerning such exchanges (with Sweden) had been circulated. He told me in the most unreserved manner possible, that the King, his Master, had ceded the small Carribee Island of St. Bartholomew [1] to the King of Sweden, in consideration of his having consented to allow Gottenburg, instead of Wismar, to be an entrepot for the French trade in the Baltic, the latter never having proved of the least benefit. This is the whole of what passed.

Notwithstanding the answer of the Dutch to the Emperor's demands has been arrived here since last Tuesday se'nnight, no particulars have been published concerning it. I hear nothing that contradicts what I had the honour to inform your Lordship of relative to the entire rejection of His Imperial Majesty's requisitions... The Abbé Barthélémi, [2] formerly chargé des affaires at Vienna, is appointed to the same character at London, and he will set off from hence in a few days.

[1] St. Bartholomew. One of the lesser Antilles, not far from St. Kitt's and St. Eustatius. It was ceded to Sweden by France in 1784, and restored in 1878.

[2] Abbe Barthelemi. The person referred to is not the Abbé Barthélemy, the archaeologist and writer, who was certainly alive in 1784, but his nephew, François, Marquis de Barthélemy, who was a diplomat by profession. He negotiated the treaties of Basel with Prussia and Spain, in 1796, was a member of the directory, and lived till 1830. He was made Marquis in 1815.

22. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
12 August 1784.

Tho' it is probable that Sir Horace Mann will have written to you on the subject, I cannot omit to inform your Lordship of the resolution which has been taken by the Pretender[1] to legitimate his Natural Daughter, Lady Charlotte Stuart, and of his having given her the title of the Dutchess of Albany. He lately applied to the Minister here in her behalf, and has obtained leave to have her name registered in the Parliament of Paris. I am inclined to think that Monsr. de Vergennes has been induced to comply with his request by the hopes of putting an end to the importunities of a person who has been continually applying to the Government here for such supplies as he thought necessary to his appearing with éclat, and not with any design of giving the least umbrage to our Court. Sir Horace Mann,[2] in his letter to me, adds, that the King of Sweden had undertaken to speak to the King of France in favour of the Pretender.

23. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
19 August 1784.

I hope the Plan of the Treaty between France and Holland, of which your Lordship has obtained a copy, corresponds in some measure with the information I gave upon the subject some time ago. Hitherto I have not found it possible to discover how far the Articles of this Treaty are agreed upon, but it is not probable that any definitive step will be taken by this Court, till the Emperor's demands upon the Dutch shall have been established... Prince Henry of Prussia arrived here last Tuesday, but it is not yet known what stay he will make in this Capital.

[1] Pretender. The Young Pretender, born 1720 died 1788. His wife, whom he married in 1780, was Louisa, Countess of Albany, who afterwards married Alfieri.

[2] Mann. Sir Horace Mann, born 1701 died 1786, was British envoy at Florence, and a friend and correspondent of Horace Walpole.

24. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
26 August 1784.

I have not observ'd any material change in Political Affairs (since writing last) and tho' Prince Henry since his arrival here has occasioned a great deal of speculation amongst those who are interested in observing his motions, yet I am confident that hitherto nothing has passed between him and the Minister. I am apt to think that a Person of so high a rank and on whom the eyes of everyone are fixed, is not likely to be employed by the King of Prussia in the conduct of any secret negotiation.

I hear that the French Cabinet now presses very much the conclusion of the Treaty of Alliance with the Dutch, according to the plan proposed; a circumstance which seems to imply some apprehension that the latter Power, should it have time to become better acquainted with its true interests, might not continue in the present degree of friendly disposition towards this Court.

The late very high winds and bad weather have done very considerable injury to the works which were carrying on at Cherbourg. It is reported that the Marechal de Castries will set out in a few days to examine into the nature of the mischief.

25. HAILES *(in the Duke of Dorset's absence)* TO CARMARTHEN,
2 Sept. 1784.

... The advantage to be derived from the cession of Gottenburg to the French was generally thought, at the time the negotiation was carrying on, extremely problematical, not to say visionary, from the very little protection this Country would be able to give to its Fleets arriving from that Port, without one in the Channel. No probable reason offered itself to me for its being made a matter of importance by this Court, till I considered the position of Cherbourg and the nature of the works now carrying on there. Everything concurs to induce me to believe that the construction of this Port is the grand object of the Cabinet at this moment, and the very peculiar advantages it will possess from its spaciousness and situation must render it very formidable to England, who has

enjoyed so long the sovereignty of the Channel. I am assured that if a tower, of sixty feet in height, were to be built upon a certain elevation in the neighbourhood of the Port, it would command the whole of the Channel and no ship could go into or out of Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight without being observed. The Harbour will be able to contain a hundred Ships of the Line. I was in hopes of being able to send your Lordship, by this day's messenger a plan of the works as they are carrying on, and drawn by Monsieur de la Touche Treville, a Captain in the French Navy, but, as I have been disappointed, I must wait for a conveyance by some safe hand, or till next week by the Messenger.

Your Lordship, no doubt, will be anxious to know the opinions of People in this part of the World concerning the stay Prince Henry will probably make in Paris. I can venture to assure your Lordship with a great degree of confidence, that, if anything were in agitation between the Courts of Berlin and Versailles at this time, I should be able to obtain early information of it ; but it does not seem likely, and particularly that Prince Henry should be engaged in it, as it is certainly known that his coming to Paris was suddenly and unexpectedly determined upon. I might add to this that his reception at Versailles was such as by no means indicated a very friendly disposition towards him here. He waited near half an hour in the King's ante Room, and was even on the point of going away, if one of the Gentilhommes de la Chambre had not called him back.

If it be true that the Treaty between France and Holland is about to be concluded, as it is generally believed, I confess I am at a loss to form any opinion concerning it. The singularity of a people entering into an alliance, the benefit of which is merely prospective, and not to be felt at the moment, in which they stand most in need, has puzzled many here who have not been inattentive to their situation.

I have heard that the Teméraire, a Ship of the Line, and some Frigates are shortly to sail from Brest for the coast of Angola, where the Portuguese have committed several acts of violence and disturbed the French in their Negro Trade. Of this circumstance

your Lordship had intimation in the course of last winter. I am rather inclined to think that it will end by compensation and submissions being made by the Court of Portugal.

26. Hailes to Carmarthen, 6 Sept. 1784.

As it is now generally known that the Emperor has declared in his ultimatum to the States General that he will desist from his pretensions to Maestricht &c, but is determined to abide by his demand for the opening of the Scheldt, I take an early occasion of acquainting your Lordship with this circumstance, material, indeed, in itself, but still more so by the light it seems to throw on the present design of his Imperial Majesty.

A Danish gentleman, on whose veracity I can depend, has assured me that he saw a few days ago, upon Dr. Franklin's[1] table, among other plans for Treaties of Commerce, a Project for one with the Emperor, and that upon his asking the Doctor what possible advantage America was to derive from an intercourse with such insignificant Ports as Trieste and Ostend, he observed in answer, "that he had forgot Antwerp..."

27. Hailes to Carmarthen, 9 Sept. 1784.

The Duke of Dorset not being yet returned... I have the honour to acknowledge... the receipt of your Lordship's very important dispatch in Cypher. I shall use my best endeavours... to promote or to increase the jealousy that may appear to subsist between the two branches of the House of Bourbon. I have already propagated, as much as I could with discretion, the account your Lordship has sent to the Duke of Dorset, as it appears to me that, if it once becomes a received opinion that the French have acted an underhand part towards the Spaniards, it will operate with much more effect to their disunion, than anything we might say, as the

[1] Franklin came to France in 1776 to solicit help for the American insurgents. He returned to America in 1785, and died in 1790.

latter will not fail to impute all our intelligence to sinister intentions and particular views.

I have found people rather difficult of belief about the double part the French are said to have acted, and they seem to think that the danger of a discovery of such conduct would be more than equivalent to the advantage to be derived. They say that a Monsr. de Tournon, an expatriated adventurer, is the person who conducted the defence of Algiers, and that he is entirely disavowed by this Court.

I... send you the plan of the works now carrying on at Cherbourg. The mole is to consist of fourscore immense cases of a conical form, filled with stones, and to be sunk close to each other. The expense of every one of these cases is estimated at near twelve thousand pounds. Very different opinions are formed about the success of it, but the most sanguine do not believe it can be finished in less than ten years, even admitting that no accidents happen to retard it...

Nothing is said about Prince Henry : I believe it is the wish of this Court to unite as much as possible the interests of Prussia and Sweden, and it must be confessed that the accomplishment of such a view appears very likely, as the King of Prussia is particularly dissatisfied with the Empress, on account of the late partiality to His Imperial Majesty in the present disputes between him and the States.

28. Dorset to Carmarthen, 16 Sept. 1784.

I do not find that anything material relative to the present differences between the Emperor and the States General has transpired during my absence from this place. If I were to form a conjecture, the latter will be obliged to give way, tho' I do not see how this Court will be able to apologize to the States-General for having deserted them on so important an occasion.

I have never perceived the least ill humour in the Spanish Ambassador in consequence of the failure of the expedition against Algiers. I agree... that it would be very much for the interest of

Great Britain to set at variance the Branches of the House of Bourbon, but I do not believe there has been a shadow of pretence for any coolness upon the late occasion. If want of success in the attempt upon Algiers had been owing to any Frenchman acknowledged by his Country, the Spaniards would have had reason to complain, but I understand that M. Tournon is banished France, or that he fled his country to avoid a worse fate. Prince Henry of Prussia will remain here some time longer : I do not think his reception has been very flattering to him. I am persuaded his visit to this Court is not of a political nature...

29. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
23 Sept. 1784.

After announcing the arrival of Mr Craufurd, the dispatch continues : I have reason to believe that matters are not yet settled between the Emperor and the Dutch, since I can venture to say with certainty that it is the intention of this Court to prevail, if possible, with the latter to acquiesce in the demands of the Emperor, who seems indeed resolv'd upon exacting a full compliance on the part of the States General. Your Lordship may however be assured that I shall give you the earliest information, so soon as I am made acquainted with the final settlement of the subject of dispute between those two Powers.

30. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
30 Sept. 1784.

Announces that the claims of the Emperor still remain unsettled, and that the general opinion is that the Dutch will have to give in ; also that Prince Henry's stay in Paris is rather uncertain.

31. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN.
7 October 1784.

...I can assure you that there is not the least movement in any of the French Ports excepting Toulon, where they have just launched three two-deck'd Ships, and are building others, but with no great alacrity. There are also two Frigates of force in the abovement-

ioned Harbour ready for Sea, but their destination is not known; report says they are to be sent to the Black Sea.

32. Dorset to Carmarthen
14 October 1784.

I wrote to M. de Vergennes, and I enclose for your perusal his answer to me upon that subject. I have since had an opportunity of seeing Monsr. de Brantzen, who, in the course of our conversation, assured me that the conduct of the States General, respecting the naval force to be kept up in the East Indies, would be entirely conformable to our wishes, and that he was preparing a memorial to that effect, which he expected he should in a very short time have orders to deliver to me. I must not omit to observe... that, Monsr. de Brantzen upon this occasion, expressed himself to me in the most friendly manner...

We have the best reason for believing here that no resolution, (concerning the dispute between the Emperor and the Republic), has yet been taken by the Cabinet of Versailles... I hear that the Emperor has sent orders to the different Places in the nearest neighbourhood of the Low Countries to collect all their troops and it is said they will amount to 22,000 men. This number, added to about 16,000 more already in Flanders, makes an army sufficient to oppose the Dutch who have about 35,000.

33. Dorset to Carmarthen.
21 October 1784.

I have the satisfaction of transmitting to your Lordship M. de Vergennes' letter to me respecting the Naval Force which the French Cabinet have judged expedient to send to the East Indies; your Lordship will no doubt agree with me in thinking that so small an armament is by no means alarming...

I have not hitherto been able to inform myself with certainty of the real designs of this Court in the present juncture of Affairs, but I have great reason to think that the Ministry here wish to avoid, if possible, entering into the quarrel between the Emperor and the

Dutch and the orders lately issued by the Maréchal de Ségur,[1] Secretary of War, for marching the greatest part of their troops to the Inland and Southern Provinces, confirm me in this opinion...

34. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
28 October 1784.

... The Spanish Ambassador, I understand, very much disapproves the claims of the Emperor upon the Dutch, considering them as altogether unwarranted and unjust. How far he may think the opening of the Scheld might be advantageous to Spain I cannot pretend to determine, but every maritime and commercial Power (Holland alone excepted) would surely reap benefit from a freer and more direct communication with the Emperor's dominions. We wait with impatience the return of the French Courier from Vienna, who is expected back in the course of two or three days, when, if anything of material importance shall have taken place, I propose sending a messenger extraordinary to your Lordship...

35. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN.
1 November 1784.

I have just received information of the arrival of the Imperial Ambassador's Courier from Brussels, who brings the important intelligence of the resolution of the Emperor not to desist from his demand for the opening of the Scheld. As the Dutch Plenipotentiaries have, in all probability, left Brussels at the time I am writing, and the troops receiv'd orders to march, His Majesty's Minister there, no doubt, has dispatched a Messenger to your Lordship, but, as the passage from Ostend may in this bad weather prove uncertain, I have not hesitated to send off one who may possibly reach London sooner. This event is entirely unknown here, but it cannot long remain a secret, and it is not unlikely that I may hear tomorrow at Versailles the impression that it will have made upon the French Cabinet.

[1] Ségur. Philippe Henri Marquis de Ségur (1724-1801), became Minister of war in 1780, and resigned in 1787.

36. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN.
4 November 1784.

Since last writing I have seen M. de Vergennes, who told me that, in consequence of the Emperor's determination to support his pretensions to a free navigation of the Scheld, he had written to England to know the sentiments of our Court upon that important business... It is beyond a doubt that the Court of Versailles is very much embarassed by the alliance lately form'd with Holland, being by no means disposed to proceed to extremities against the Emperor, to pacify whom and to sooth the Dutch every art and finesse will on that account be employed; if this should prove altogether insufficient, much will then depend upon England. The Dutch Minister, M. de Brantzen, told M. de Vergennes, last Tuesday, as I have been informed, that, should France refuse her assistance to Holland the latter would be obliged to throw herself into the arms of England, to which I am confident, M. de Vergennes could not, in the present state of things, make any answer. I have from the first had but one opinion respecting the intentions of this Court, having been throughout persuaded that nothing but unavoidable necessity would compel it to declare against the Emperor.

With respect to the conduct which the King of Prussia means to pursue upon this occasion, I cannot speak with any certainty, but from what I have been able to collect I am induced to think that he is at present dispos'd to preserve a strict neutrality... The number of men that have received the Emperor's orders to march for the Low Countries amounts to about 45 or 50,000. The Emperor was not returned to Vienna when the Dutch Answer arrived there, but the measure had been resolv'd upon before his departure for Hungary.

37. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN.
11 November 1784.

The Despatch no. 27 in cypher, which your Lordship mentions to have sent with no. 28 of the 19th ult. never came to hand, at

which I am the more surprized as it seldom happens that letters, tho' they are opened and examined, have been entirely suppressed and kept back from the persons for whom they were destined. Your Lordship's despatch in cypher, no. 28, I have received, and likewise your last. I agree entirely with you in thinking that if France should engage in a Continental War, the most essential advantages may be derived to England, but however appearances at this time may seem to favour such a desirable an event, I cannot persuade myself that France has as yet resolved upon taking part in the present disputes, tho' I can form no judgement with respect to what conduct the Court of Versailles may hereafter be induced to pursue. No steps have hitherto been taken that indicate any disposition towards a rupture with the Emperor, and I am still of opinion that M. de Vergennes and the Ministry here will, in a great measure be guided by the resolution of our Court. M. de Brantzen has not given an answer respecting the Naval Power to be maintained in the East Indies, but I have found no reason to suspect any alteration of those sentiments he professed when he last talked with me on that subject, and which I communicated to your Lordship.

38. Dorset to Carmarthen.
18 November 1784.

I am a good deal surprized that Monsr. de Barthélemy should have been entirely silent in regard to the instructions which, I am confident, from the assurances of M. de Vergennes, he must have lately received from that Minister. I am also at a loss to guess what could be his motive for endeavouring to persuade your Lordship that a change in administration at this Court was likely to take place, since I can venture to assure your Lordship that no such report is credited here, and I am, moreover, of opinion that Monsr. de Vergennes will certainly continue Minister, unless some unforseen event happen to force the King to dismiss him. There can be no doubt that Monsr. de Breteuil[1] aspires to be

[1] Breteuil. Louis Auguste de Tonnelier, Baron de Breteuil 1733-1807. He was prime minister in 1783, succeeded Necker in the control of the finances, and emigrated in 1789.

premier, but should he ever be gratified in that ambition, England will, in my opinion, have little to apprehend either from his superior talents or his capacity as a Statesman.

Nothing new has transpired respecting the conduct of this Court in the present state of affairs, excepting that letters of Marque having been issued by the Court of Vienna, have been countermanded at the interposition of M. de Vergennes. Monsr. de Merci, the Emperor's Minister here is very much disposed to think that matters will be accommodated. A Courier from Vienna is daily expected, before whose arrival no steps will be taken. The King is very much displeased with some persons of Rank who have ask'd his leave to offer their services to the States General, and has dismissed their applications with no small degree of ill humour. It is said that the Dutch have solicited M. de Maillebois[1] to take command of their troops, but after what I have related I cannot suppose that he will have permission to accept the offer, notwithstanding it is confidently said in Paris that he is to set out for Holland in a few days. I understand that M. de Belgoioso is thought to have conducted himself too precipitately in his negotiation with the Dutch Ministers at Brussels, for which he is much blamed by the Cabinet here.

I shall take the first opportunity to communicate to the American Ministers your Lordship's sentiments conveyed to me in your last despatch and shall strictly observe the general line of conduct towards him which your Lordship has laid down for me...

39. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
25 Nov. 1784.

...It is at present very much my opinion that the French have no design of abandoning their new allies. Monsr. de Vergennes entertains great hopes that the Emperor will listen to terms of accommodation, but the steps His Imperial Majesty has taken do not seem to indicate a disposition to be easily sooth'd into a relinquishment of his original demands.

[1] Maillebois. Yves Marie Desmarets, Comte de Maillebois, born 1715 died 1791

I have acquainted the American Ministers that the United States are required to send a person properly authorized and invested with the necessary powers to London, my Court not choosing to enter upon any negotiation of importance at a third place. I wish your Lordship would inform me what answer I am to send upon the subject of their letter stating some propositions with regard to certain articles of the Preliminaries of Peace, and other matters of mutual convenience to the two Countries...

I send herewith a state of the French Forces in India.

40. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
2 December 1784.

Monsr. de Vergennes acquiesced entirely in the proposals offered on our part respecting the Naval Force to be kept up in the East Indies, and has assured me that no Ship of the Line shall be sent upon that service. I have repeatedly applied to the Dutch Minister to learn the determination of the States General upon the same subject, but he has not yet received his instructions. I have however, every reason to believe that their High Mightinesses will be guided in their resolutions with regard to that matter by those of the Courts of England and France. I must not omit to add for your Lordship's information that the Force to be sent to the West Indies is, as Monsr. de Vergennes has declared to me, intended to be no greater than what shall be judged absolutely necessary for the suppression of smuggling in that part of the World. I am endeavouring to obtain the most accurate state possible of the Dock-Yards of this Country, and I flatter myself I shall in a short time be able to send your Lordship some satisfactory information concerning them.

Nothing has yet transpired to enable me to speak positively as to the issue of the present situation of affairs. The movement occasioned here by the approach of an Austrian Army towards the Low Countries has spread a general alarm, orders having been issued the day before yesterday for all officers below the rank of Colonel, absent with leave, and likewise for all soldiers absent on furlough, to join their respective corps before the 15th of

January. Yet notwithstanding these appearances of preparation, I cannot persuade myself that France will suffer herself to be drawn into a Continental war without undoubted assurance of the pacific intentions of Great Britain, and also of the Empress of Russia, to whom Monsr. de Vergennes had certainly written, and whose answer is impatiently expected. In short, My Lord, this Court seems to be proceeding with such cautious circumspection that I should not be surprized even at any endeavours to persuade the Dutch that the present question relative to the opening of the Scheld is not an object of sufficient importance to embroil Europe. The large offers the Dutch are making to recruit their army occasion great desertions from among the Emperor's troops in the Environs of Antwerp.

41. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
9 Dec. 1784.

...I have now no doubt that, should the Emperor continue to persist in his demands upon the Dutch this Court will oppose his pretentions, but I am at the same time persuaded that the greatest delicacy will be observed towards His Imperial Majesty, so as not to compel him to consent to an accommodation that would be in any degree derogatory to His honour and dignity : how the Cabinet of Versailles will be able to manage so difficult a business time only can show. Your Lordship being acquainted with the dispositions of the rest of the Powers of Europe, is better able to judge than I can possibly be of the nature of the difficulties they have to encounter, and how far those difficulties may be increased beyond the reach of any efforts to adjust the present disputes and in consequence destroy the hopes we had entertained of a continental war. The situation of affairs at this time is such that I am satisfied it is owing only to the season of the year that the campaign is not already begun ; and, if the Emperor should remain inflexible... I do not see how a war is to be avoided since the only expectation the Ministry here can have of preserving peace is in the length of time there will be for negotiation. Your Lordship will best determine what measures to pursue in opposition to the intrigues of the French

Cabinet, which, I have reason to think, are now forming with all the Petty Courts of Germany.

I have an account from L'Orient, by which I find that there is only one Ship of the Line upon the Stocks there, and I am also informed that the quantity of sand has increased so much, owing to neglect since the East India Company left that port, that it is very much doubted whether Ships of Force can be ever built there in future, and even whether the above-mentioned Ship, which was begun some time before the conclusion of the War, can be launched.

42. Dorset to Carmarthen, 16 Dec. 1784.

The Emperor having given orders, of which I believe there is no doubt, for a second division of his Army to march towards the Low Countries, all the Military Men here are preparing their camp equipage with uncommon alacrity. It is very apparent that the Cabinet of Versailles is much disconcerted by your Lordship's very proper answer to the Comte d'Adhemar's application to you, and I am convinced that nothing can more alarm M. de Vergennes than the appearance on our part of continuing to observe a strict neutrality.

43. Dorset to Carmarthen, 23 Dec. 1784.

I send enclosed the conditions of the new loan, which is completed; the subscribers are to deposit a fifth immediately. Nothing new has transpired, this week, relative to the state of affairs between the Emperor and the Dutch. The French continue their preparations, and their army will be in readiness early in the Spring. It is said that the King of Prussia expresses his disapprobation of the Emperor's proceedings, but has not declared how far he means to oppose them.

44. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
28 Dec. 1784.

I will endeavour to obtain all possible intelligence with regard to the views of this Court respecting the East Indies, and am well aware that however friendly and plausible the language of the Minister here may be, we cannot be too jealous of the operations of this Country in that part of the World. But I have not yet heard of any new plan being in agitation to weaken our influence in India ; the Force sent thither from hence has certainly a pacific appearance. Monsr. de Maillebois goes to take the command of the Dutch Army. His appointments are considerable, besides a pension of 100,000 French livres settled upon him and Madame de Maillebois for their joint lives. He of course quits entirely the service of France. Nothing new has transpired during the last ten days. No answer has been received from Russia, the preparations for an early campaign still continue. I send enclosed an account from L'Orient, which I believe to be tolerably accurate.

45. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
30 Dec. 1784.

No answer has yet been received by this Court from the Empress of Russia. The only matter of any importance... is the Note which has been delivered by the Russian Minister at the Hague to the States General, a copy of which I send herewith. The Comte de Vergennes has applied to me to obtain a written assurance, similar to that which your Lordship is in possession of on his part, respecting the Naval Force intended to be kept up in India by Great Britain...

I have reason to think, from what fell from M. de Vergennes, that the Comte d'Adhemar will have orders to make a formal complaint against scandalous paragraphs which have lately appeared in some of the English Newspapers, and I trust the authors of them will, for the honour of our Country and Government, be made proper examples of.

46. PRIVATE LETTER FROM THE DUKE OF DORSET, 30 Dec. 1784.

I have this moment heard that the Parliament of Paris has presented a very strong memorial to the King respecting the new loan proposed by the Controlleur General de Calonne, [1] and they have expressed in very spirited language their wish to have the accounts of the expenditure of the public money laid before them ; perhaps no answer will be given, but so extraordinary a measure will make a great noise in Paris.

[1] Calonne. Charles Alexander de Calonne, belonged to the noblesse de la robe. He was born at Douai in 1734, and was made Controlleur General des Finances in 1783. He died in 1802.

DESPATCHES FROM PARIS

JAN.-DEC. 1785

1785

1. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
13 Jan. 1785.

Monsr. de Calonne, the Comptroller General, laid before the King in Council yesterday a plan of forming an East India Company to which several merchants had given in their names as subscribers in the sum of three hundred and fifty thousand French livres each. What the result of this proposition may be I cannot pretend to say, but I should apprehend that the arrival of a French Frigate, dispatched by Mons. de Bussy, in which Mr. Staunton, who is now here, came as a passenger, will for the present retard the execution of any new plan in agitation for so distant part of the world. Mr. Staunton will set off for London this day or tomorrow, and will have the honour of informing your Lordship of the situation of the British affairs in India.

There is nothing new to communicate to your Lordship respecting continental affairs : the Emperor continues his preparations for a campaign, and the French troops are joining their respective regiments according to the orders issued some time since to that effect. I enclose your Lordship a copy of the answer of the States General to the Empress of Russia. The Frigate arrived at Brest from the East Indies is the Coventry, which was captured by M. de Suffrein's Squadron.

2. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
20 Jan. 1785.

I wish it were in my power to satisfy your Lordship in regard to your enquiries respecting the conduct of the several Courts im-

mediately occupied upon the subject of the disputes between the Emperor and Holland, and likewise as to the real situation of these matters, so far as they particularly engage the attention of this Court. But the variety of opinions, according as the different interests of individuals lead their judgements, add so much to the difficulty of ascertaining the exact situation of affairs, that I must confess myself as yet unable to declare with any certainty the true state of the business, and I verily believe that all are at present equally in the dark. The purport of the Emperor's answer to the note of Nov. 20, was neither more nor less than a determination to persist in his demands. Overtures have since then been made by this Court to His Imperial Majesty and also to the States General, but hitherto without effect. I do not suspect that there is much intrigue going on at this time in the French Cabinet, at least not in any degree to threaten the removal of the present premier. I expect to be able to send your Lordship, in the course of a few days, some authentic intelligence respecting the Ports of Brest and Toulon.

3. Hailes to Carmarthen, 20 Jan. 1785.

People here are so wearied with conjectures about peace and war, that, for near a fortnight past, the question seems to have been entirely dropt ; the language of the Court, for reasons very evident, has been, indeed, uniformly peace. I have not seen M. de Mercy for some days past, but the last time I met him he continued to assure me that nothing had been adjusted. Had affairs taken a favourable turn for this Court, there is little doubt but the good news would have shortly have become public, as every one here has been much more inclined to lessen than to magnify the danger.

It must be very pleasing, My dear Lord, for every Englishman to see how completely the French have missed their object in engaging themselves in the American quarrel. One cannot but suppose that their views were at least, to divide with us the commerce of the New World, for it can hardly be thought that an

enlightened and politic nation would have precipitated itself into a distressful and bloody war, without hoping some more substantial advantages than the glory of rendering America independent. Concluding, therefore, that their views were directed to a very considerable participation of American Commerce, we may, I think, already decide, without rashness, that this project is entirely frustrated. Notwithstanding the very heavy load of taxes and the consequent high rise of the price of all sorts of provisions in England, we still continue to furnish America with every necessary article of life, at a cheaper rate and of a better kind than the French can possibly do. If I am not mistaken, Great Britain has sent to the Continent of America, since the peace, near a thousand ships ; the markets, indeed, of that Country have been considerably overstocked by the too great eagerness of Commercial people, and it may therefore be supposed that there will be a diminution of exports for a year or two, till the Trade has found its level ; but the Exports and Imports between France and America are so inconsiderable that they are hardly worthy to be mentioned. What indeed can be more natural? All the articles of commerce produced by France are articles of luxury, and consequently not in demand from an infant and needy Country. But not only are the Americans obliged to confess the superiority of our first necessaries of life ; the French themselves, notwithstanding the heavy duties laid upon them, since the peace, have imported them to a very extraordinary extent, and their anxiety to conclude the Treaty of Commerce at this time makes it strongly to be presumed that they feel the balance of trade against them. The Course of exchange has been invariably five per cent and upwards in favour of England for many months past. The little respect paid to the Ministers of the United States seems a further proof of the small advantage France expects to derive from them ; the Government of this Country begins to see plainly that till America grows luxurious, no useful connexion can be form'd with her...

4. LETTER FROM MR. HAILES,
26 Jan. 1785.

Pray, My dear Sir, remember me kindly to Lord Carmarthen, and tell him to be particularly aware of M. d'Adhemar. You may remember I wrote to him some account of the Duke's complaint of the disrespect shown to his Seal. The subject having been mentioned lately by the Duke to M. de Vergennes, the Minister told him that Lord Carmarthen had heard of the affair, and that his Court judged him to have been in the wrong. The Duke, never having written about this business himself, asked me the other day if I had ever sent an account of it. I own I was a good deal embarrassed by the question, and I fear the Duke will suspect the private correspondence between Lord Carmarthen and myself.

Notwithstanding the change of ground in the negotiation between the Emperor and the Republic, and the declaration made by His Imperial Majesty that it was out of a tender consideration for the Republic that he had demanded the Scheld in lieu of his other claims, and that therefore he was willing to accept of Maestricht and the sums of money, we cannot see at present any prospect of accommodation. When the Duke asked M. de Vergennes about it the other day, he shook his head. No two men are of the same opinion about the business. It is very odd that Mr Staunton should not have called on the Duke to let him know the result of his conversations with the Maréchal de Castries. Pray send us a light, if possible, into the Trincomalee affair. We know not what language to hold about it.

5. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
27 Jan. 1785.

...Matters are far from being settled between the Emperor and the Dutch; for tho' His Imperial Majesty seems disposed to relax in some degree from his claim to a free navigation of the Scheld, yet the terms he insists on are such as the States General think at present that they cannot, compatibly with their honour and dignity submit to. The conditions propos'd by the Emperor are

that his original claims upon the Republic shall be complied with, and that the States General should send deputies to apologize to him for the insult offered to his flag on the Scheld. But the divisions in Holland run so high at this time that it is imagined a submission of that sort will not easily be obtained, a matter of much uneasiness to M. de Vergennes, who complained to me "de la roideur des Hollandais a cet égard." In the mean time the first division of the Emperor's Army continues its march, but the second has received orders to halt till the determination of the States General shall be known. Between seven and eight thousand Croats arrived within these few days at Inspruck, where they are to remain till further orders.

The Emperor is still at Vienna, where very favourable reports have been received from Wallachia and Transylvania. The chief of the revolted peasants, named Horian, is taken, and it is imagined that a general amnesty will be issued to the remainder of the deluded Insurgents.

I cannot speak positively as to Maestricht, but I believe His Imperial Majesty insists also upon that important fortress being ceded to him, and likewise stipulates for a sum of money to indemnify him in part for the expenses he has incurred.

6. GEORGE STONE TO CARMARTHEN,
3 Feb. 1785.

The Duke of Dorset not having time to write himself, on account of the arrival of M. de Vergennes' letter just as his Grace was setting off for Versailles, has directed me to acquaint your Lordship that Monsr. de Vergennes had expressed to him a strong wish to have from the Court of London a declaration in writing, similar to that which he had transmitted from his Court, respecting the Naval Force to be kept up in the East Indies.

7. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
3 Feb. 1785.

As it is generally believed that the States General will on no account be brought to comply with the Emperor's terms, with

which I acquainted your Lordship last week, a war is at present thought to be inevitable. Monsr. de Vergennes certainly begins to doubt the issue of his negotiations, and is exceedingly apprehensive that the violence of party in Holland will frustrate the hopes he had entertained of effecting an adjustment of the differences. Sir James Harris having applied to the Minister at the Hague for a State of the Naval Force intended to be kept up by their High Mightinesses in the East Indies, I have been assured by M. de Brantzen that the answer will of course be given to that Minister without delay. I mentioned to your Lordship, not long since, that a proposal had been offered to the King in Council by Monsr. de Calonne for the establishment of a Company of Merchants to trade to the East Indies; I can now inform your Lordship that a trading Company is to be established, under the particular control of Government, and that, according to the plan adopted, the Merchants are not to have any management or concern whatever in the Territorial possessions of France in that part of the World.

8. Dorset to Carmarthen, 17 Feb. 1785.

In consequence of the reports which have prevailed for some time past relative to a negotiation supposed to have been carrying on between the Emperor and the Elector of Bavaria, I have been at pains to obtain some intelligence which might be relied on, respecting that matter, and can now venture to assure your Lordship that the following is the real state of the case. The Emperor proposed to the Elector Palatine the exchange of his Dominions in Flanders for Bavaria, and France is believed to have favoured the scheme, on the consideration of its proving eventually advantageous to herself, as, in consequence of such an exchange, she would only have one frontier to defend against a powerful neighbour on the side of Alsace, instead of an open and extensive Country towards Flanders. The Emperor, however, four or five months since, desisted from this object, which had been from the first strongly opposed by the Duc de Deux Ponts; yet it may

possibly be resumed by His Imperial Majesty at some future period, when he shall find himself more at leisure to give it his attention.

I have nothing new to communicate to your Lordship with regard to the disputes with Holland, but a Courier from Vienna is daily expected, on whose arrival something of importance relative thereto will probably be known... The accounts from Holland confirm the information I sent your Lordship of the Divisions there, which have increased to an alarming degree.

9. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
24 Feb. 1785.

Monsr. de Vergennes desires me to assure your Lordship that it has ever been far from the thoughts of the King, His Master, that anything evasive was intended on our part with respect to the restoring of Trincomale to the Dutch. His Majesty is perfectly satisfied that the omission has been altogether accidental, and is much pleased with the assurances your Lordship has expressed of the good disposition of our court to remove every appearance of misunderstanding that may have taken place in the minds of those who are employed by the two Powers in that part of the World.

I shall endeavour by every possible means to obtain information upon the subject of your Lordship's dispatch No 8 in Cypher, which I received last Sunday by the Post, but I must observe to your Lordship that it will be difficult to ascertain the different sums respectively allowed, as the business passed through various hands, on account of there not being at present an established Court Banker.

Of the present state of the negotiation between this Court, the Emperor, and the Dutch, I can only assure your Lordship that nothing is yet decided. Monsr. de Maillebois will set out for the Hague on Saturday next.

Monsr. Neckar[1] is forbid to come to Paris or within four leagues

[1] Necker published the Compte Rendu in 1781. This led to his retirement from office. In 1784 he published a more detailed account on his administration, under the title "De l'administration des finances de la France," which is the book referred to.

of it. This extraordinary prohibition has been issued against him since the publication of his Book upon the Finances of France.

I enclose to your Lordship a State of the ships at Toulon, and I have reason for thinking that the French are not more actively employed at Brest.

10. Dorset to Carmarthen, 3 March, 1785.

...My enquiries with respect to the American agents employed in Europe have not been attended with the satisfaction I could have wished, owing to the number of persons by whom that business is conducted, which makes it impossible to discover the respective quotas. It is, however, certain that a large sum of money is appropriated for the use of the Ministers of the United States, without which assistance it would by no means be in their power to appear with any degree of credit. Monsr. de Beaumarchais [1] was first employed in this business, to him suceeded Monsr. le Roy de Chaumont; Messrs. Grand et Couteux, Bankers, afterwards had jointly and since have had separately the management of it. Mr. Adams, Commissioner from America at this Court, who resided some time in Holland, has been also concerned in different payments, as have likewise Mr. Carmichael at Madrid, Monsr. Dumas at the Hague and Mr. Ridley, who (not long since) resided at Paris, but is now in London.

I have just heard (the report comes from M. de Simolin, who had it from M. de Rayneval) that a fleet of 26 Ships of the Line, and as many Frigates are preparing for Sea in Russia. Three very large bodies of Troops are said to be making towards the Frontiers of that Empire, commanded in chief by the Marshal Romanzov,

[1] Beaumarchais. Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, born 1732, son of a watchmaker. He conveyed arms and munitions of war to the American insurgents and made a large fortune by these means. He wrote, Le Barbier de Seville, Le Marriage de Figaro, Tartare and La Mère Coupable. He died suddenly in 1799.

and in particular by Prince Repnin,[1] M. de Potemkin[2] and M. Solticoff.[3] This report has some credit at Versailles.

11. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
3 March, 1785.

I have seen M. de Simolin. I shall observe the hints you have given me; I have no idea he has the least connection at this Court, he has no reason to be attached to the French Interest, his reception at Versailles was the coldest possible; I never saw anyone, I may say, so compleatly ill received, it will be very difficult for him to get over the prejudices against him. I have advanced £200 to a person who procured me the intelligence I sent you respecting the Port of Toulon; I shall be obliged to you for an order for my reimbursement. I am in hopes, in a few days, to send you the like account of what is going on at Brest, for less money. *Il n'y a point de nouvelles.* I don't see how a war is to be avoided; the Dutch still remain obstinate; it is our business if we can to keep them so. I shall be able by the next Courier to send you something satisfactory respecting the captured Ships, which you wrote to me about a short time since.

12. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
3 March, 1785.

There is very little to trouble you with by this day's Messenger. The communication of your dispatch upon the Trincomale affair seems to have given entire satisfaction at Versailles. I cannot omit to mention to you an idea that M. de Suffrein told me he had all along entertained of our delay in the execution of that business. His opinion was that we were endeavouring to engage the King of Candy, in the Island of Ceylon, by underhand means, to attack the Dutch, that we intended to keep possession of Trincomale till

[1] Repnin Prince Nicolas Vassilievitch, born 1734 died 1801.

[2] Potemkin Gregory Alexandrovich, born 1736 died 1791. Founded the town of Kherson.

[3] Soltikoff Ivan Count, born 1736, field marshall and governor of Moscow, died 1805.

we found them sufficiently embroiled, and that we should then propose the absolute cession of that place, as the price of the pacification that our interference was to effect.

M. de Simolin's reception at Versailles was by no means flattering, and a very extraordinary prepossession seems to be entertained against him, both in the Court and in the Town... M. de Maillebois' departure has been deferred from day to day.

13. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
17 March, 1785.

I have the honour to inform your Lordship that the plan which I some time ago mention'd to have been laid before the King by M. de Calonne the Comptrolleur General for a Company of Merchants to trade to the East Indies, has been in a great part approved of by His Majesty, tho' I have not yet been able to learn the particulars.

...The Emperor has consented to receive at Vienna the Dutch Deputies, Messrs. de Weissmar[1] and Leyden (I am not certain as to the orthography of the names). No propositions whatever have as yet been offered, but from the pacific dispositions of Prince Kaunitz[2] and Monsr. de Vergennes there is reason to expect that this matter will be brought to an amicable conclusion, unless the violence of Party in Holland should raise obstacles that may prevent such terms being proposed by the States-General as would be judged by the Court of France to be suitable to the dignity of His Imperial Majesty...

14. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
17 March, 1785.

M. de St Marc arrived at Paris some days later than you had announced him to me, but we have had two interviews, and have considered of the most effectual means to obtain the intelligence desired by Government upon the important objects of India and

[1] Probably Wassenaar.

[2] Kaunitz. Wenceslaus Anthony, Graf Rietberg, Prince Kaunitz, born 1711, chief minister of Austria from 1743 till 1794, died 1794.

the Maritime Force &c. He says he has heard since he has been here that M. de Suffrein has lately recommended very strongly to the Maréchal de Castries to make a settlement in the Island of Madagascar for the sole purpose of forming seamen, that the plan has not been disapproved of by the Maréchal, but that M. de Calonne cannot be brought to consent to furnish the means. The Comptroleur General, he says too, is much dissatisfied with the enormous expenses at Cherbourg, and the works there, he thinks, will be suspended on that account. I have, however, good reason to believe that the King lately declared to the Duc d'Harcourt that, let what would happen, peace or war, he was determined not to diminish either force or expence in the prosecution of that favourite object.

M. de Launay, of whom perhaps your Lordship has some knowledge, is returned from England, where he has been negotiating with East India people, and picking up what intelligence he could in order to direct the Maréchal de Castries in the Regulations of the new East India Trade.

M. de St Marc proposes setting out for Brest and Rochefort on Monday next, and he has desired me to advance him a month's allowance, which, according to your Lordship's directions, I have consented to do...

15. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
24 March, 1785,

...The Emperor has signified to the States General that he will receive their deputies, provided it be settled before they leave Holland that they are to apologize for the insult offered him by firing on his flag. Other conditions are also insisted on by His Imperial Majesty, which are not yet known, but it is thought they will not meet with much difficulty. After the interview of the Deputies with the Emperor at Vienna, they are to return to the Hague, and, should no fresh obstacles arise, an amicable negotiation will take place at Paris, and full powers be given to the respective Ministers resident here from the Courts of Vienna and the Hague for finally adjusting the several points in question. There is great apprehension that some unpleasant consequences may ensue,

should the States General much longer defer coming to some determination, as it is with the greatest difficulty that the Troops of the two Powers are prevented from firing upon each other.

16. Hailes to Carmarthen, 28 March, 1785.

I have just received a letter from the Duke of Dorset, dated last night at Versailles to desire that I would write in his name to your Lordship to acquaint you with the Queen's happy delivery of a prince, who has been named Duc de Normandie...[1] Her Majesty and the young Prince are both well and this event has occasioned a great and universal joy.

17. Dorset to Carmarthen, 31 March, 1785.

...The States General having acceded to the previous conditions insisted on by the Emperor, it is expected that the Deputies will repair to Vienna without further delay and there is every reason to suppose that matters will at last be amicably settled between that Monarch and the Dutch. In the mean time the negotiation is to be carried on here by the respective Ambassadors, Monsr. de Merci having already received his full powers to treat. Thus your Lordship sees that a storm will, almost to a certainty, blow over, which, at one time, seem'd to threaten a general continental War, and would have strangely perplexed and embarassed the Councils and Administration of this Court. The particulars have not yet transpired, but it is imagined that the Emperor will not be satisfied without being disbursed a great part of his expenses.

The plan for an East India Company is finally settled, as far as I can understand, nearly according to the proposals delivered in by the Comptrolleur general, and which I have had the honour of stating to your Lordship in former dispatches. An Arrêt du Conseil

[1] Duc de Normandie. This was the future Dauphin, the unfortunate child who died in the Temple 8 June 1795.

will be published in the course of a few days containing the regulations relative thereto.

18. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
7 April 1785.

From my not having yet received any answer from the American Commissioners I conclude that they are not very well pleased with the doubts we seem to entertain of their competency as Plenipotentiaries. It is however certain that the States of America are daily strengthening the hands of Congress with respect to Commercial regulations, and with the power already delegated to the Messrs. Adams, Franklin and Jefferson, they may be considered as fully authorized to treat, notwithstanding any appearance of want of subordination to Congress on the part of the States in other matters. A packet from Philadelphia is daily expected to arrive, which may be an additional reason with those gentlemen for deferring their answer to me...

19. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
7 April 1785.

I have nothing new to communicate to your Lordship concerning the arrangement between the Emperor and the Dutch, which altogether depends upon the resolutions of the States General, and their agreeing or not to the last terms proposed by His Imperial Majesty. M. de Vergennes was, last week, very sanguine, having little doubt that everything would go well; but the delay of the departure of the two Deputies from the Hague has an appearance rather unfavourable to his wishes. Yet it is still generally believed that matters will be amicably adjusted. However the whole will be known with certainty in the course of 10 or 12 days.

Monsr. de Vergennes wishes very much to know whether your Lordship has sent the necessary orders to the East Indies for the restitution of Trincomale; I assured him that it was fully the intention of my Court and that I was persuaded the proper instructions have been sent to the British Commanders. I shall however be glad to know from your Lordship whether such orders

are gone or not, that I may from authority inform M. de Vergennes of it. I must beg leave also to remind your Lordship that that Minister has been for some time in expectation of receiving an assurance in writing on our part, of the Force intended to be kept up in the East Indies. As he has already given one in the name of his Court, it seems but just and reasonable that he should have a similar assurance from us. The King's reception at Paris was very flattering and pleasing to him. People of all ranks showed him the strongest proofs of their attachment and respect...

20. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
14 April 1785.

The first conference in form between the Comte de Merci, the Imperial Ambassador, and Messrs. Berkenroode and Brantzen, on the part of the States General, was held on Monday last, when, owing to some difficulties still subsisting, I can venture to assure your Lordship with certainty, no one material point was settled, and the meeting was adjourned to Saturday next. It seems, the Dutch are not yet finally resolved how far they will agree to the propositions insisted on by the Emperor, and notwithstanding that they have solemnly pledged themselves to send Deputies to Vienna, they think themselves at liberty to object to several of the Emperor's demands.

From these delays it may be presumed that much time will be taken up in removing the obstacles which present themselves, and that however anxiously desirous the Ministers of this Country may be of preserving peace, fresh difficulties may possibly arise to overset their endeavours.

21. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
21 April 1785.

...I send your Lordship the Arrêt de Conseil, just published by which the establishment of the East India Company is regulated.

22. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
21 April 1785.

...A second conference between the Imperial and Dutch Ambassadors has been held with as little effect as was the former one. Couriers are continually passing between Versailles and the Hague, but the delays attending the liberations of the States General are likely to prolong the negotiation for some time, which circumstance will probably prove disadvantageous to the Dutch in furnishing the Emperor with a pretence for rising in his demands upon them, among which at present is one for twelve millions of Livres by way of indemnification, and it is confidently asserted that M. de Vergennes, who finds himself a good deal perplexed with the affair, wishes to persuade the Dutch to accede to the full demand of his Imperial Majesty, but Their High Mightinesses consider it as too exorbitant, and have hitherto refused to grant more than one fourth of that sum.

I enclose to your Lordship herewith some intelligence I have just received which, as it regards the views of this Court in Egypt and Asia, I think deserving of attention, and therefore communicate it to your Lordship, tho' I cannot take upon me to vouch for its authenticity...

23. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
28 April 1785.

I have scarcely anything worth communicating to your Lordship by this day's Messenger relative to the state of the negotiation between the Emperor and the Dutch. A courier has been dispatched to the Hague for more explicit orders for Messrs. Berkenroode and Brantzen, and the Comte de Merci is retired into the Country to wait the return of the Messenger. In the mean time everything here seems to indicate a pacific disposition, but the distracted situation of the States General may possibly produce fresh matter of delay, and the dangerous spirit of faction which certainly prevails in Holland, will in all probability prevent any decision taking place so long as the fermentation shall continue...

SHOREDITCH PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

Monsr. de la Perouse,[1] whose equipment has caused various speculations, will shortly sail upon an expedition in search of new discoveries with two Ships of 500 Tons each. Another report says he is to take with him one ship of 54 guns, and three Frigates, and that Mons. de Clonard, an Irishman, is to go second in command...

24. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
5 May 1785.

I have communicated to Mons. de Vergennes in writing the propositions I received from your Lordship, respecting the regulations which our Court wish to have observed in the East Indies, and I hope to have that Minister's answer to send it to your Lordship next week.

The negociation, which had commenced between the Imperial and Dutch ambassadors, continues at a stand, nothing having been done in it since I had last the honour of writing to your Lordship. The two Couriers, who were dispatched to the respective Courts are neither of them returned, but I do not understand that any fresh difficulties are supposed to have arisen, and I can venture to assure your Lordship that the Ministers here are perfectly satisfied that everything will be amicably settled, at least for this year. All the accounts from Holland agree that that Country is in a most distracted state, and it is believed that, had the Emperor proceeded with the same degree of spirit with which he first urged his pretensions, it would have required the utmost exertions of this Court to relieve the Dutch from any claims His Imperial Majesty might have thought proper to impose.

25. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
5 May 1785.

I have the honour to acquaint your Lordship that Mons. de la Perouse will shortly sail from Brest, and it is reported, with some degree of authority, that he has orders to visit New Zealand, with

[1] Jean François Galaup, de La Pérouse, born 1741, perished in the South Seas about 1787. His remains were found near Vanikoro 1826.

a view to examine into the quality of the timber of that Country, which is supposed, by the account given of it in Captain Cook's voyage, may be an object worthy of attention. This plan is recommended by Mons. de Suffrein, who says, that ships may with little difficulty go from the Mauritius to that Country. It is believed that the French have a design of establishing some kind of settlement there, if it shall be found practicable, as it will be necessary to tap the trees at least six months before they fall them, in order to lighten the wood, which has no other defect, as is said, than that of being too heavy to use in its natural state.

The Marquis de la Taille, Commander of the French Frigate the Emerald, having landed at Sierraleone, on the coast of Africa, with the design of forming a factory for the Slave Trade, was repulsed by the natives, and obliged to return to Senegal from whence he had sailed. M. de Carbonneau, his Lieutenant, was wounded in the attack, and the expedition failed entirely ; But it is supposed that another attempt will be made upon some other part of the Coast.

26. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
5 May 1785.

...Mr. Adams, who is appointed by the United States of America Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of Great Britain, will leave Paris in a few days, but, as he must first go to the Hague, to take leave in form of Their High Mightinesses, he will not be in London in less than three weeks or a month. Dr. Franklin will soon return to America, and Mr. Jefferson, who is joined in the commission with the above-mentioned Gentlemen, is to remain Minister at this Court. The uncommon dryness of the season has occasioned a great scarcity of several of the necessary articles of life. The Populace, the other day, testified so strongly their dissatisfaction upon the sudden great rise in the price of butter, that it was judged expedient to double the Town Guard. Should many more days pass without rain, very disagreeable consequences are to be apprehended. An order was issued, by Council, a few days ago, granting permission to the Peasants in the Provinces of Champagne, Lorraine

&c, to turn their cattle into the Royal Chaces and forests, in consideration of the great deficiency of fodder throughout the Kingdom... The Duc de Choiseul is very ill, and thought to be in great danger. [1]

27. Craufurd to Carmarthen, 5 May 1785.

I had the honour of addressing you on the 10th of March, and have since received your Lordship's letter of the 19th April, which informs me of the complaints made by Mons. Barthelemi at the delay on the part of England to discuss the new arrangements intended to be made between Great Britain and France. [2] I communicated to Mons. de Rayneval your Lordship's readiness to receive and report any proposals he might wish to make, to which he replied, that he could not say anything further on the subject, or make any specific proposals, until I was empowered to accept or reject the basis of reciprocity, as stated by him in our first conference, and which I had the honour of transmitting to your Lordship in my dispatch no. 1. viz.

Que les sujets des deux nations contractant jouiront respectivement dans les deux Royaumes des avantages qui y sont accordées aux nations les plus favorisés tant pour la navigation que pour le commerce, toutefois que cela ne deroggera pas aux traités subsistants, et principalement à celui d'Utrecht de 1713 a moins qu'il n'y est quelque chose que nous croyons devoir changer ou expliquer pour le bien Général.

To this proposal I have been waiting your Lordship's answer as his Majesty's instructions do not permit my agreeing to it without receiving his approbation. M. de Rayneval seems to attach much importance to it, tho' I cannot help considering it too general to be of great moment to either party.

[1] Etienne François duc de Choiseul. He was born in 1719 and died shortly after this.

[2] This has reference to the Commercial Treaty which was signed in 1786.

28. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
12 May 1785.

The Courier from Holland with the definitive answer of their High Mightinesses to the requisition made to them by His Imperial Majesty is not yet returned, but is hourly expected. There is still every reason to expect that this tedious affair will terminate in an amicable adjustment. M. de Vergennes is quite sanguine, and seems to entertain no doubt that his endeavours to preserve the tranquility of the Continent will have proved successful. Indeed the whole has turned upon the influence this Court has exerted, and the decisive part His Most Christian Majesty has taken in support of His new allies the Dutch.

The Duc d'Harcourt, who as Governor of Normandy, superintends the works carrying on at Cherbourg, is gone thither. It is said that the whole is to be completed in eight years, but it is difficult to imagine that an undertaking of such a nature and which must necessarily be attended with so much expense, can be carried on with any certainty or even probability of its being finished within so short a space of time. From a tower which is to be erected on some very high ground on that coast, it will, I am informed, be very easy to discern our fleet at Spithead, and even to ascertain with some degree of accuracy, the rates of the Ships there.

29. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
19 May 1785.

The Comte de Vergennes has not yet sent me any answer to the proposals and communicated to him by letter on the part of our Court respecting the East Indies, but he informed me last Tuesday that he waited for the report of the Maréchal de Castries upon that subject.

Mons. de Pérouse will sail from Brest the latter end of this month with only two ships. The King has formed great expectations from the intended voyage of that able officer, but M. de la Perouse himself is less sanguine, and even despairs of succeeding

in the search of new discoveries, after the attempts that have already been made by Captain Cooke. [1]

The Courier whose return from the Hague was so anxiously expected is arrived from thence, without having brought any decisive answer. The two Deputies, who were long since supposed to have been chosen, and who have even been daily expected at Vienna by the Emperor, are not yet named. By what I can learn, it is probable that nothing will be decided in less than a month or six weeks. I need scarcely point out to your Lordship that was the British Court to exert the influence it possesses in the Republic for the purpose of thwarting the plan of reconciliation which the French have so long been and are still labouring to effect, the present moment seems to be the most favourable for encouraging the difficulties and for promoting the dissensions which prevail in Holland...

30. Dorset to Carmarthen, 26 May 1785.

In answer to your Lordship's enquiries about the supposed project of the Emperor for the exchange of His territories in Bavaria, I have to assure your Lordship that, unless M. de Vergennes holds a language entirely opposite to his opinion (which I have not any reason to suspect) he does not entertain the remotest idea of such a plan being in agitation. But supposing him to be insincere in his declarations, and that there really exists such a design, it will prove a rare example indeed of the secrecy of Cabinets should nothing certain transpire, when the two Imperial Courts, France, the Elector, and the Duc de Deux Ponts are all Participes Concilii. I must, however, mention to your Lordship that the rumour of such an exchange being intended has occasioned so great an alarm in the Elector's [2] Dominions as to have rendered

[1] 1728-1779.

[2] The Elector. This was Charles Theodore, who was Palsgrave in 1733, Elector Palatine in 1742 and Elector of Bavaria from 1777 to 1779. The Duke of Deux Ponts or Zweibrücken was Maximilian Joseph, who became Elector of the Palatinate and Bavaria in 1799, and becoming King in 1806 died in 1825. Mannheim was the Capital of the Palatinate, Düsseldorf of Pfalz-Neuburg.

him very unpopular, to a degree even to induce him to quit Munich and to go to Mannheim, where his reception has been by no means flattering, and it is supposed that he is now, for the same reason, meditating an excursion to Dusseldorf.

With respect to the negotiation between the Emperor and the Dutch, nothing new has transpired since I had last the honour of writing to your Lordship. A few millions of Florins, I have reason to believe, are now the only subject of difference remaining to be settled.

I send your Lordship enclosed an account I have just obtained of what is doing at Rochefort. Your Lordship will perceive that it differs a little from that you lately received from hence, but I have reason to think it is equally to be depended upon...

31. Dorset to Carmarthen, 29 May 1785.

I have the honour to enclose to your Lordship a copy of the Letter I have this day received from M. de Vergennes in answer to the proposals respecting the East Indias which I communicated to that Minister in writing the 5th of this Month.

32. Dorset to Carmarthen, 2 June 1785.

...The free gift of the clergy to the King amounts this year to eighteen millions of livres, to be raised for that purpose by a loan, the terms of which are not yet known, but the usual regularity observed by that body in their payments of interest gives reason to expect that there will be no difficulty in filling the subscription. Some degree of deference seems to be paid to the opinions of M. Neckar by the present Minister of Finance. The plan for obtaining a more perfect acquaintance with the balance of commerce and that for the extinguishing and restraining the Pensions of the Court, were both pointed out by M. Neckar, and are both now adopted by M. de Calonne...

The Countess of Albany,[1] wife to the Pretender, is here in her way to Brussels, where she proposes to stay a short time and from thence to return to Italy. The separation from her husband is entirely concluded, and 60,000 livres, the sum which was settled upon her by this Court at her marriage, will be continued to her for her life.

33. THE AMERICAN COMMISSIONERS TO DORSET,
16 May 1785.

...We have now the honour to inform your Grace that Congress, on the 24th day of February last, appointed a Minister Plenipotentiary to reside at the Court of His Britannic Majesty, who proposes to proceed to London in the course of two or three weeks, which makes a more particular answer to your letter unnecessary.

34. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
9 June 1785.

I had the honour of mentioning to your Lordship, in my dispatch of the 5th of last month, that Mons. de la Peyrouse had other objects in view than merely that of making discoveries, and I particularly mentioned the orders he had received to touch at New Zealand, with a design of examining into the nature of the timber there, which, according to M. de Suffrein's report, is of an excellent quality for repairing Ships, but more particularly for masts. I can now inform your Lordship, from good authority, that 60 criminals, from the prison of Bicêtre, were last Monday conveyed under a strong guard and with great secrecy to Brest, where they are to be embarked on board M. de la Peyrouse's ships, and it is imagined they are to be left to take possession of this lately discovered Country.

A report having prevailed that a Line of Battle Ship had been dispatched to the East Indies, I made it a point to ask M. de Vergennes if there was any foundation for it, and was assur'd by him

[1] After the death of the Pretender in 1788 she lived in Thrence. She married the Poet Alfieri and died in 1824. She belonged to the Stolberg family.

that there was none, but he admitted a Frigate had sailed a few days before to that part of the World, with clothing for the Troops.

The revocation of the Arrêt, by which the Americans and other Foreigners are admitted to a participation of the Trade to the West India Islands, is much talked of at this time. Some interested Individuals, having possessions in Martinique and Guadaloupe, are supposed to have persuaded M. de Castries to adopt the measure, which is so much complained of in the Ports of France, that have been used to supply the West Indies with provisions of all kinds.

The negotiation between the Emperor and the Dutch is still at a stand, but, unless Their High Mightinesses shall think it proper soon to come to some resolution, or at least permit Their Deputies to set out for Vienna, Their delay may create a degree of dissatisfaction among the Ministers here, which may prove essentially disadvantageous to their cause.

35. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
16 June 1785.

The two Deputies, Messrs. de Weissmar and Leyden, after some warm remonstrances sent from hence, left the Hague the beginning of this week in order to proceed to Vienna. His Imperial Majesty, who has been on an excursion into His Italian Dominions, will have returned to that Capital before the arrival of those Gentlemen. Though the negotiation is at present quite at a stand, there is an appearance of willingness on the part of the States General to come to an amicable agreement, and there is scarcely any doubt that matters will end to the satisfaction of the Courts of Vienna and France. M. de Vergennes will, however, think himself very fortunate if he shall have been able to effect a final conclusion of this business before the time fixed for the Court's going to Fontainbleau...

36. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
16 June 1785.

The grand question whether the Americans are or are not to be admitted to a participation of the Trade to the French West India

Islands is not yet determined, and, though it has been discussed with much freedom in different publications, Government seems still to be irresolute whether to revoke or to confirm the Edict of the 30th of August. The enclosed précis, which was distributed with the Journal de Paris, there is good reason to think, was the real cause of the present suppression of that paper. Although the admission of Foreigners to the French Islands be a measure which M. de Castries might wish to make palatable, the Précis contains so many reflections on former measures and is written in a style so little suitable to this Government, that it is not extraordinary it should have excited the indignation of the Ministry. Should the Edict after all be revoked, there is no knowing how far it might operate towards alienating the Americans from France. The extension of their, at present, so limited commerce is an object, no doubt, of the greatest magnitude with them, and, if their hopes are frustrated in this instance, much benefit might be derived from it by England.

By the death of M. de Bussy, the command in the East Indies devolves on M. de Souillac, but it is not yet known who will be appointed to succeed him from this Country...

37. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
23 June 1785.

I must not omit to mention to your Lordship a circumstance which has given great umbrage here, and the Marine Minister has, in consequence, resolved upon sending orders that similar conduct should be observed in all the Ports of France towards English Ships of War that may have occasion to touch at any of them. The circumstance I allude to is the peremptory refusal, said to have been conveyed by the Commanding Officer at Portsmouth to M. Ducret, or any of his crew to land there. I do not presume to question the propriety of the motives which induced such a refusal, but I think it my duty to inform your Lordship, that it is here thought to have been very extraordinary conduct, and I cannot help submitting to your Lordship's consideration whether it may not be prudent to offer some slight apology, in order to prevent a measure of so un-

friendly a nature from being adopted according to the present intentions of this Court.

I have nothing new to communicate to your Lordship in regard to Continental affairs. The Deputies left the Hague last week, and it is now thought they may possibly arrive at Vienna before the Emperor will have returned from his excursion into Italy...

38. Dorset to Carmarthen, 30 June 1785.

A report strongly prevails, and even letters from Italy (tho' not official) mention, that the Turks had taken possession of Ragusa,[1] but it is not known whether the measure is avowed by the Administration of the Porte. If it be so, it seems strongly to mark that hostile disposition of the successors of the late unfortunate Vizir, from which the Court of Versailles are in such continual embarassments and apprehension. It is little doubted here but that a war must break out shortly between the Turks and the Russians. The violence and weakness of those who are at the head of the Porte cannot fail to provoke and at the same time encourage the Empress to commence an attack, from which the greatest advantages may be expected. The Emissaries, who have been sent from this Country, with a view to instruct the Turks in Military discipline, have made but little progress, and M. de Brantauneau (formerly mentioned) one of the best qualified, has, from illness and other difficulties, very little answered the expectations entertained from his mission.

There is much reason to believe that the French Cabinet have serious designs of making an establishment in Egypt, whenever a favourable conjuncture shall offer itself. But as such a measure can only be carried into execution with a view to a nearer communication and connection with India, apprehensions are naturally conceived of opposition from England...

Having made further enquiries about the supposed departure of the Sphynx, a 64 gun ship, for the East Indies, I have the satisfaction of being able to inform your Lordship that I have seen a

[1] Ragusa. The independent duchy of Ragusa continued to exist till 1806.

note from the Marechal de Castries to M. de Vergennes, which mentions that Ship is in Port, careening and that she is not destined for any particular part of the World.

39. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
7 July 1785.

Mons. de Vergennes, not having heard officially from Venice, he cannot speak with any degree of certainty concerning the report of the Turks having taken possession of Ragusa, which I had the honour of mentioning to your Lordship in my last dispatch. I have however been further informed that a large body of Turks, who were sent to quell the Montenegrins, demanded a passage through the Ragusan State, and, that their request not having been immediately complied with, they forcibly entered the Country, and seized all the Fortresses that lay in their way. Letters from Constantinople are expected with great anxiety, as it is much apprehended that the weakness and bigotry of the new administration will be productive of great disorders in that Empire, and I can venture to assure your Lordship that the Cabinet of Versailles is seriously alarmed lest the insufficiency of the present Government may by some imprudent step again involve the Porte in a quarrel with the Empress of Russia.

M. de Calonne has trebled the funds originally appropriated for carrying on the works at Cherbourg, and the Administration in general seems to be animated with the same spirit for the advancement of the undertaking. Some people, however, less sanguine, are inclined to think the success of it very doubtful, and others that the thing itself is altogether impracticable. The wooden cases, which enclose the stones and mass that form the cones, are left dry at low water, and have in consequence already been much injured by the heat of the Sun.

The Deputies from the Hague are supposed to be arrived at Vienna, and the Emperor is on the road to the Capital.

40. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
14 July 1785.

The report of the Turks having taken possession of Ragusa, which

is certainly premature, appears to have had its rise from the following circumstance. A bashaw was sent with a large number of troops to reduce the Montenegrins to obedience, and in his march towards that Country found it expedient to halt his Army at a small village named Nagusa, where he remained some days. The similarity of names no doubt therefore occasioned the mistake, and the alarm which consequently took place. The friends and adherents of the late Grand Vizir are still pursued with great inveteracy. Every Courier brings an account of some fresh massacre, and simple banishment is the mildest sentence His remaining partizans have to hope for. The present Capitain Pacha has been the principal author of all these violencies.

M. de St. Priest,[1] the late Ambassador from the French King to the Porte, has received a letter from Constantinople, which mentions that the Sultan[2] had appointed a Khan over certain provinces in Tartary, which is likely to give very great offence to the Empress of Russia, and, from the disposition of the present Ottoman Ministry, it is more than probable that, should Her Imperial Majesty object to the appointment, she will receive an answer that may provoke her serious resentment...

Monsr. de Luzerne, elder brother to the gentleman of that name, who, during the War, was Minister Plenipotentiary from this Court to America, is appointed Governor of St. Domingo. The accounts that have been received of the disturbances in that Island have caused great uneasiness here, as the number of the Blacks exceeds that of the Europeans in the proportion of at least 10 to 1. An affray is said to have happened in which 300 slaves lost their lives, but I have not been able to obtain any other particulars...

41. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
21 July 1785.

I think it my duty, previous to my departure from Paris, to acquaint

[1] St. Priest. Francois Emmanuel Guignard, Comte de St. Priest, born 1735, minister at Constantinople 1768, in Holland 1787, Minister of the Interior 1789, died 1821.

[2] Sultan. The Sultan at this time was Abdul Hamid, who reigned from 1774 to 1786.

your Lordship for the information of His Majesty's Ministers, with what appears to me to be the system that has been adopted by those who compose the Cabinet of Versailles, so far, I mean, as relates to its concerns with Great Britain. In my first conversations with Mons. de Vergennes, which, during my residence here of eighteen months, have been very frequent, that Minister, I must acknowledge, shewed no unwillingness to coincide in any measures that might be proposed for the mutual advantage of the two kingdoms, but his conduct as well as his language have of late taken a very different cast. Of the causes of such a change your Lordship may perhaps not be ignorant, tho' I confess I am not myself well able to account for it otherwise than by the dissatisfaction which has certainly attended the St. Eustatius business. The continual application of the merchants of St. Eustatius to obtain a settlement of their several claims, which they had long ago expected would take place, have vexed the Minister a good deal, and I suspect this to be one reason for the resolution he seems to have formed of avoiding as much as possible, by every pretence of delay, the conclusion of any business about which we discover any degree of anxiety. There is also another cause, of much greater weight in my opinion, to which no attention whatever seems to have been given, I mean the Treaty of Commerce between Great Britain and France. I mentioned to your Lordship at the time the extreme desire Mons. de Vergennes expressed to me before the arrival of Mr. Craufurd that that matter might be entered upon, and he seemed indeed to promise himself that, as His Majesty had appointed a Commissioner expressly for the purpose, the business would at once be seriously introduced. But now after so many months, when a large portion of the time fixed by mutual consent for the arrangement is expired, that nothing has been done or even proposed on our part, it is not very surprising to observe a degree of ill-humour, which has already shown itself and is but too plainly manifested by the Arrêts du Conseil that are directly levelled at the commerce of England. Mr. Craufurd transmitted one to you last week, and another is expected to make its appearance in the course of a few days, whereby a duty of 30 per cent will be laid upon English goods of every kind. These

Arrêts may be considered also as proofs that the balance of trade is at present much against France, and it is not improbable that the measure has been taken at this time with a design of increasing the discontents which are supposed to be already subsisting amongst our Manufacturers, on account of the arrangements with Ireland.

An Arrêt of the 10th of this month strictly prohibiting the importation of muslins, cottons, and other goods of India, tho' it has the appearance of being immediately directed against the English Trade, yet the necessity of giving every degree of encouragement to the newly established East India Company (which however does not gain much credit in this country) may be another reason for the publishing this Arrêt. But the severity of it is rather uncommon, as it gives a power of inquisition to the Police against the Smugglers, of which I believe there are few examples.

Under these circumstances, I cannot help taking this opportunity of expressing my wish that His Majesty's Ministers should take such steps as they may think expedient in order to establish a more friendly intercourse between the two Countries, which, considering our present situation, cannot but be essentially advantageous to Great Britain...

42. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
4 August 1785.

...Two Couriers are arrived from Vienna, one within these few days to M. de Vergennes, and the other the night before last, to M. de Mercy; and the conferences between the Dutch and Imperial Ambassadors are to be renewed in the course of next week. I have been confidently assured that, at a late interview between the Minister and M. de Brantzen, a proposal was made by the former for the Republic to enter into an alliance with the Emperor as well as France; and by way of inducement to that object, some millions of Florins were offered to be deducted from the demand of compensation for Maestricht. M. de Brantzen is said to have received this proposal with great surprize, and to have declared himself entirely ignorant of the intentions or inclinations of Their High Mightinesses with regard to such a measure.

The reimbursement of the rescriptions, of which your Lordship will have seen such frequent mention in the newspapers, was a manœuvre of M. de Calonne's to animate the confidence of the public. In order to raise the confidence of the public. In order to raise the sum of twenty millions of Livres, ten new places of Farmers General are to be created, and, as the lease granted to the present people expires in about 18 months, the new one will be declared, as is usual, at Fontainebleau, that is to say, somewhat more than a year before the extinction of the old one, in order that they may have time to call in their monies and pay the price of the renewal, which, altogether, may amount to twenty millions of Livres more. Some other places, it is also thought, will be created for the purpose of raising more money, and great expectations are formed by Government of the advantages to accrue to the revenue by the check which will be given to the fraudulent introduction of all sorts of articles into this city by the means of the Wall which is now built round it. Your Lordship will not be surprized at the difficulties in which a Minister of Finance finds himself in this Country, when you consider the very profuse manner in which the public money is disposed of; and indeed such is the nature of the Government, the Court and its dependents, that a Comptroller General with the best disposition for economy, and the sincerest intentions of administring well, must necessarily meet with such obstacles as to render it impossible to pursue any steady and digested plan. An example offers itself in support of my opinion so very striking that I cannot omit to mention it. Mesdames Adelaide[1] and Victoire, the King's Aunts, are now at Vichi, where they were advised to go sometime since, to drink the waters. The expences of the journey, and a residence of six weeks or two months, will, it is calculated, amount to near three millions of Livres. M. de Calonne cannot be supposed to have favoured the undertaking this journey at so unreasonable a cost, but it cannot be supposed, neither, that he could venture to oppose it. Madame Adelaide is known to possess a great share of the King's confidence, and the

[1] Adelaide, eldest daughter of Louis XV, born 1732 died 1800; Victoria born 1733 died 1799.

Comptroller General knew perfectly how ineffectual and even how dangerous his interference might prove on such an occasion. This circumstance, one would imagine, must strike M. Neckar very forcibly and prove to him how little effect his book can have towards the reformation of French Finance. M. de Calonne, after the example of many predecessors, is in hopes of retaining his place, by favouring such measures as are likely to captivate the public, and give éclat to his administration ; and the great works which are carrying on at Cherbourg, Dunkirk, and elsewhere, have on that account met with his entire concurrence and support. After all, as no regular system of Finance can be pursued in this Country, perhaps M. de Calonne, being a man of ingenuity, expedient, and intrigue, is as fit as any one for the post he fills. But what is most to be lamented by the nation is that the precarious tenure by which the place is held increases the avidity of those who are in it, and gives occasion to every species of indirection.

M. de Vergennes seems to remain very firmly in his seat, the difficulties of the Imperial and Dutch negotiation being now got over ; the death of the Duke de Choiseul too, by leaving a powerful party without a head, cannot fail to confirm him still more, besides which his merit and experience are such indeed as makes it generally allowed that it would be extremely difficult to supply his place with so able a successor.

The slow progress of the Treaty of Commerce has occasioned a great deal of ill-humour towards us at Versailles, as no doubt Mr Craufurd will have informed your Lordship, and the two Arrêts du Conseil, which have been fulminated against us, have been suspended with more forbearance than could have been reasonably been expected, considering the great detriment French manufactures have sustained, and the great advantages we have derived from the balance of Trade having been so much and so long in our favour. People in general think that this strong measure will hasten the conclusion of an arrangement between us, but so great is the fondness for those articles of our manufacture, against which the Arrets are particularly levelled, that many are of opinion, should the Treaty not take place, that they will still find

their way into this kingdom, both fraudulently and loaded even as they are with a duty of 45 per cent.

Your Lordship has, no doubt, taken notice of the Arrêt sent by the Duke a short time since, by which the property of the Ship of war, the Dauphin, is transferred by the King to the East India Company, under whose direction she is to make a voyage to China. Ships of Force, or Ships capable of becoming Ships of Force, bear with them a suspicious appearance, and should any of the 64 gun ships, intended to be laid up, as it is said, be hereafter converted to the service of the Company, I shall be apt to think that that establishment is meant to make designs much more hostile than commercial.

M. de Mirabeau's two books, upon the Caisse d'Escompte, and the Bank of Saint Charles at Madrid, have been written, not only with the connivance, but I believe with the sanction of M. de Calonne, and in reward of having combated, with so much force and dexterity, the abuse of the one and the establishment of the other, a pension of 6,000 Livres has been granted to him...

43. Hailes to Carmarthen, 11 August 1785.

Having had occasion to speak to the Minister on Tuesday about a private application, I took an opportunity of mentioning the concern with which I had heard the account of the two Arrêts du Conseil that relate to our manufacture had been received in England; and I told M. de Vergennes, tho' not as from instruction, that I believed such a measure had been the less expected, as we knew that the Court of France could not be ignorant how completely the time of the English Cabinet had been taken up by the consideration of the Commercial Affairs of England and Ireland. M. de Vergennes endeavoured to convince me that what had been done proceeded neither from impatience nor ill-humour, but that as we on our side, had found it necessary to make new regulations for the security of the Revenue, and the protection of our Manufactures, so they had been obliged to adopt similar measures : that what the preamble of the last Arrêt set forth was literally the case,

and that the introduction of English manufactures had risen to so crying an enormity that, unless French goods were announced as English, there was no chance of their finding a sale. He concluded however by saying, that an Arrêt de Conseil was not irrevocable, and that everything might be set to rights by Mr Craufurd and M. de Rayneval.

The great number of English families now resident, or travelling in France, is a circumstance which I have more than once thought of mentioning to your Lordship, as not altogether unworthy your notice. It would be extremely difficult to ascertain in any degree what the number amounts to, but I have good reason to believe that there is scarcely a town in which there are not one or more families settled. How far such large emigrations to this Country and others may desire to be considered as an object of future taxation, in case of necessity, I will not pretend to decide, but only beg leave with submission to suggest...

It is surprising to see to what an excess the spirit of adventure and public gaming is arrived in this City. Estates are every day advertised to be sold, in order to supply the means to speculate. An undertaking similar to that of our New River Company and intended for the distribution of water to all the parts of Paris, after having languished for a long time, is now become so much the favourite of the public, that the shares of the Company, which were originally sold for 1200 Livres each share, are now risen to 3860 Livres.

The accounts that have been received here of the humiliating conditions to which Spain has submitted in her Treaty of Peace with the Algerines, that is to say, to the payment of a million of Piastres and the furnishing them with a number of pieces of Cannon, seem scarcely credible. The Chevalier Heredia says, I have been told, that the person who treated with the Algerines has gone beyond his instructions.

Orders, I hear, have been sent to the Governor of St. Domingo to enforce the Ordonnance which occasioned the revolt of the Negroes, and to treat them with the greatest rigour in case of their continuing refractory...

44. Hailes to Carmarthen, 18 August 1785.

On the subject of your Lordship's last letter No. 27 (see no. 10) by Lauzon, which I received on Monday last, I had the honour to observe that, hitherto, the Cabinet of Versailles have shewn no signs, either of approbation or dislike of the League entered into by his Majesty in his electoral capacity, and the language of the friends of the Emperor is, that it is extremely natural that France, convinced as she is that nothing serious is intended was the affair of the exchange of Bavaria, should be indifferent as to a measure which was meant only to guard against it. Persuaded, however, as I am of the pacific intentions and wishes of this Court, I cannot but think that the League, as tending to prevent a plan being carried into execution that would in all probability have disturbed the peace of Europe, has given great satisfaction here. The same reason that induces the French Minister to take so active a part in order to effect a reconciliation of the Emperor with the Dutch, will also lead him to endeavour to prevent a rupture between the Emperor or Empress and the King of Prussia as in either case it would be equally difficult, if not impossible for France to keep out of the quarrel.

The last loan of 125 millions has proved very unsuccessful, and there is at this time a deficit of near 70 millions. M. de Calonne and his friends have been much disappointed in their speculations. Under the idea that this Loan would turn out as beneficial as the preceding one, they retained a very large part of it in their own hands, and by that means disobliged a great number of Capital-Bankers and Merchants, whose speculations were in consequence diverted to other objects, such as the Caisse d'Escompte, the Bank of St Charles at Mabiel, The New Water Company &c. In order to bring them back to the Loan, the Comptroller General began by employing people to discredit the other Funds, and for that purpose M. de Mirabeau published his two books. The manœuvres not having proved effectual, an Arrêt de Conseil, dated the 7th of August last, has just made its appearance,

intended, as the preamble sets forth, to put a stop to the illegal practice of stock-jobbing.

On Monday last, the Cardinal de Rohan-Soubise,[1] Grand Almoner to the King, was arrested by his Majesty's order, in the Gallery of Versailles, and conveyed, under a guard to his Hotel at Paris, from whence he has been removed to the Bastille. His Majesty, immediately upon his being taken into custody, wrote to the Maréchal de Soubise,[2] uncle to the Cardinal, to let him know that he was not secured on account of any State crime. The universally credited account is, that the Cardinal has forged an order from the Queen to the Jeweller of the Crown to deliver to him diamonds to the amount of 1,600,000 Livres, and which diamonds he actually received. What makes this event the more extraordinary is that the Cardinal is known to be a man of extremely good parts, and is in the enjoyment of the greatest honour and revenues to which any subject in the Church can aspire...

45. Hailes to Carmarthen, 25 August 1785.

The Imperial Ambassador is waiting the arrival of a Courier from Holland with the greatest impatience, and the slowness with which the Republic proceeds in the negotiation does not fail to create conjectures and even to make it believed that the peace may yet be disturbed on account of the Emperor's demands. We understand here that the Dutch are limited to the 15th of September for the conclusion of the adjustment, and M. de Mercy has

[1] Rohan-Soubise. Louis, Rene, Edouard, Cardinal de Rohan. He did not belong to the Soubise branch of the Rohans. He was born 1734, was made Ambassador to Vienna in 1772, and on his return was successively created, Grand Almoner of France in 1777, Cardinal in 1778, Archbishop of Strasburg in 1779. He was acquitted by the Parliament in the affair of the Collier in 1785, but was banished to the Abbey of Chaise-Dieu in Auvergne. He died in 1803, living at Ettenheim, a place connected with the story of the Duc d'Enghien.

[2] Soubise. Charles de Rohan, Prince de Soubise, born 1715, an intimate friend of Louis XV. His eldest daughter married a Prince de Condé 1753. He was beaten by Frederick the Great at Rossbach in 1757, but was made a Marshal in 1758, and Minister of State in 1759. He died in 1787.

declared his intention of pressing Messrs. Berkenroode and Brantzen to continue their conferences without any interruption as soon as the Courier shall be arrived. In the mean time several Imperial regiments are said to be marching towards the Low Countries.

The affair of the Cardinal de Rohan, of which I had the honour to make mention to your Lordship in my last despatch, still continues to engross the conversation and enquiries of all ranks of people in this Metropolis, but as yet nothing is exactly known. The mystery in which the whole transaction is involved gives occasion to a thousand conjectures and reports, all contradictory of one another and most without probability. Madame de Valois de la Motte (said to be descended from an illegitimate branch of the House of Valois) has been secured and sent to the Bastille, upon the strongest suspicions of having been an accomplice with the Cardinal, and of having been in possession of the Diamonds, which were fraudulently obtained from the Queen's jeweller. Some other persons have also been taken up and are confined on suspicion. The people in general, unaccustomed to events of so extraordinary a nature, have imagined there must be some intrigue of State at the bottom, and that very great personages are implicated in it—but the better informed and those well acquainted with the character of the Cardinal, believe, however the accounts may vary that a fraud or forgery has been committed for the purpose of obtaining the Diamonds. I should not omit to observe that what was not originally an intrigue may very probably become one, or give birth to more than one, inasmuch as the relations of the Cardinal, who are very powerful, have remonstrated in the most pointed manner against the conduct of the Baron de Breteuil,[1] who, it is universally allowed, has not acted with moderation in the affair. The administration of the Baron in his department has been, for a long time, extremely unpopular, on account of its severity, and there are many who think that his conduct upon this late occasion, by contributing to increase the party against him, may very shortly end in his removal.

[1] Louis Auguste le Tonnelieu, Baron de Breteuil (1733-1807).

Extraordinary efforts are making for the establishment of different manufactures, intended to supply the place of ours; and there is every reason to believe that great pains are taken to seduce workmen of all kinds from England. Besides a Cotton Manufactory at Rambouillet, under the direction of a Mr. Mills (of which I believe your Lordship has heard) and where Arkwright's spinning machine, with improvements, is employed, a glass manufactory, like that at St Cloud, is settling at Charenton. Letters patent have also been granted to Messrs Jugot and Danony to establish at Paris (under the title of Manufacture Royale) a manufactory of all kinds of hardware jewelry and plated work. But such is the nature of this Government, and so frequent are the privileges and protections granted, that a competition, which can alone give spirit and efficacy to such undertakings, can never be established...

46. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
1 September 1785.

Since I had last the honour of writing to your Lordship the Courier, so long expected from Holland, is arrived, but the instructions he has brought are such as do not promise a very speedy termination of the affair between them, and His Imperial Majesty, notwithstanding the assurance the former have had that the negotiations will be entirely broke off if every thing is not settled by the 15th of this month. M. de Mercy dispatched a Courier to Vienna on Tuesday evening, but whether any farther delay will be granted to the Dutch is not known.

M. de Vergennes continues to be very reserved on the subject of the League: he said however a few days since that the King's Ministers had had orders to conform their language to that of the Ministers of the Emperor, in the different Courts of Germany. Considering the League as a measure tending to preserve the tranquillity of Europe, and having every reason to believe that the views and wishes of this Court, at present, are pacific, I see no cause to alter the opinions I lately had the honour of submitting to your Lordship on the subject.

The Maréchal de Castries and M. de Calonne are to set out the

5th of this month for Dunkirk, in order to inspect the works carrying on at that place. The Cardinal de Rohan has accepted the Parliament for his judges in the affair for which he is confined in the Bastille. M. de la Motte, the husband of the person who is now said to have duped the Cardinal, is in England, and has disposed of a great part of the Diamonds obtained from the Queen's jeweller.

47. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
22 Sept. 1785.

I dispatch this day's messenger some hours earlier than usual, in order to forward, as expeditiously as possible, to your Lordship, the important intelligence which I have just received of the adjustment of the differences between the Emperor and the Dutch. The patriots, as they are called in Holland, being determined against the War, and having gained entirely the superiority in their contest with the opposite party, the Ambassadors of the Republic received, by their last Courier, the most ample instructions to conclude with M. de Mercy.[1] These Ministers were authorized to go as far as the sum of ten Millions of Dutch Florins, by gradual offers, endeavouring, in the mean time, to abate as much as possible. In the last conference at Paris, at which M. de Vergennes was present, everything was so far settled as to remove all apprehensions of hostilities being commenced on the part of His Imperial Majesty. I do not yet know the exact sum agreed to by the parties.

48. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
29 Sept. 1785.

Your Lordship, I make no doubt, will have heard by this time, of the conditions upon which the pacification was agreed to between the Ambassadors of the Emperor and the Republic. Ten millions of DUTCH Florins (for there was a great deal of contention about the difference of Dutch and Austrian Florins) are to be paid to His Imperial Majesty for his dereliction of all pretentions to Maestricht. The navigation of the Scheldt is made free to Imperial vessels

[1] Florimond Claude, Comte de Mercy. Argenteau (1722-1794)—Austrian Ambassador in France 1766-1790.

from Antwerp to Saftingen, and the forts Lillo and Liefkinshoek are to be evacuated and given up. Since the event of this accommodation everything seems to wear an appearance here of perfect tranquillity, the Commanding officers of the different regiments being all on their return to Court.

It seems reasonable to believe that the attention of this government is seriously bent towards some new objects in its African Colonies. I have just learnt that the Chevalier de Boufflers[1] is shortly going to Senegal, but I know not in what capacity. It may be concluded however that a person of the Chevalier's merit and distinction would hardly be sent to that part of the World, if some business of an important nature were not to be entrusted to him...

The excessive spirit of gaming in the public funds having obliged the Government (as I have already had the honour to inform your Lordship) to have recourse to a regulation prohibitory of that practice, the necessity of settling all accounts of speculation became immediate, and many of the principal Bankers of this City were thereby reduced to the greatest difficulties, and many even to the verge of bankruptcy. The Comptroller general, who has been for a long time dissatisfied with this class of people, on account of their neglect of his Loan, resolving to take advantage of their embarassment for the reestablishment of his authority, sent a few days ago to some of the chiefs of the confederacy and reprimanded them very severely for their spirit of independence, as he affected to term it. After having received their submission, however, he consented to furnish them with the sum of two millions of Livres from the Trésor Royal, to assist them in their difficulties. Small as the sum is, in comparison with the magnitude and number of the engagements in which these people are involved, it certainly has already had the effect of animating the circulation, which was stagnated to a surprising degree, and of raising the price of all kinds of stocks. The Loan in particular, which a few days ago was below par, is now at 2 and 3/8 the premium.

[1] Boufflers. Stanislas, first Chevalier the Marquis de Boufflers. His mother was the brilliant Marquise de Boufflers. He distinguished himself as governor of Senegal, and died in 1815.

49. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
6 Oct. 1785.

The day after the receipt of your Lordship's very important despatch (no. 29) by Lauzun, I waited on M. de Vergennes at Versailles. I had no sooner mentioned the Treaty of Commerce than I discovered in his countenance and manner the most evident marks of ill-humour. As the complaints in this Country had been very general and very loud against us, and as I have the fullest reason to suppose that these complaints originated with the Minister, I felt that the throwing, at once, the blame of backwardness on him would be rather tender ground to tread upon. In order, therefore, to be more conciliatory, I said that it was not without the greatest regret that we saw in England the term prescribed for the completion of the Treaty so near its expiration without even the first principles of that negotiation having been established, that I had every reason to believe that a Treaty of Commerce between the two Countries, founded upon the basis of reciprocal advantage, had all along been regarded by us as the true ratification of the Treaty of Peace; that he ought not to think us unwilling to conclude only because we had not thought proper to consent to that very general manner of treating the business, that had been offered us by France, a manner in which too we could not admit that they were authorized to treat, considering the restrictions by which they were bound by the Family Compact. On the contrary, I observed, that fears were even entertained on our side, that a conclusion was not wished for by France, as no specific proposal had been made by her who was the complaining party. I added that I was convinced that, if the business had been taken up in a different manner, and the reciprocal advantages, so much desired, discussed in detail, that the principal difficulties by this time would have been got over, and the Treaty in great forwardness. I concluded by saying that I hoped even now it was not too late, and that I believed any specific proposal from France would be received with pleasure, but if, unfortunately, it should be found that nothing could be agreed upon before the

first of January next, that then, according to the spirit and letter of the definitive Treaty, it was expected by England that the Treaty of Utrecht should be acknowledged by France to be in full force.

M. de Vergennes said in answer that, before any superstructure could be raised it was necessary to lay a foundation, and he thought the most solid was that of reciprocal advantage, and the allowing us the privileges of the most favoured nation, to which he would not admit that the family compact was any impediment. He observed with a great deal of acrimony, that he had remained a very long time without any answer upon this head, and that, therefore, making all due allowance for the important affairs that had taken up the time of the British Cabinet, he thought himself entitled to conclude that nothing was ever intended to be done in this business. He said, however, that he hoped now something might be arranged at Fontainebleau, and, since we desired a specific proposal, he would offer a proportionable reduction of duties upon any articles of equal magnitude we might think proper to name, provided we could receive French Wines and Brandies upon the same footing as those of other Countries. He ended by declaring in the most unequivocal manner, and, as I told him, in the very teeth of the definitive Treaty, that he should not consider the Treaty of Utrecht as in force against any future regulation of Trade that France might think proper to adopt, in case the present Treaty should not be concluded.

I have shewn your Lordship's letter to Mr Craufurd,[1] who does not fail to communicate to me whatever passes between him and M. de Rayneval.

50. Hailes to Carmarthen, 19 Oct. 1785.

I have not been able till now to confirm what has been said about the four millions and a half of Florins to be advanced by the French towards the payment of the Emperor's demand upon the Dutch. As it was a delicate question to put to either the

[1] Craufurd was supposed to be negotiating the treaty of commerce but was really doing nothing.

Minister or the Ambassadors of the Republic, much uncertainty has existed about the fact; however I can now assure your Lordship of the truth of it from the best authority, and I mention it the more particularly as it seems a new proof of the unalterable wish of this Court to maintain the peace of Europe.

51. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
25 Oct. 1785.

...The language constantly held to me by people of high rank, and such as I may conclude are speaking the sentiments of those who are at the head of affairs induces me to think that a still closer union between the two Countries is cordially desired. The style I adopt on such occasions is equally amicable, but I have judged it for the interest of His Majesty's service, not to omit to observe, with every conciliatory and qualifying expression, that our possessions in India can now only be regarded as an object of any jealousy; that they demand and have unremittingly the greater share of our vigilance and attention; that as our superiority in that part of the World is so decided, we have nothing to wish from our neighbours, and consequently, should any quarrel unfortunately arise there, it is not to be expected that we shall be the agressors.

Since the arrival of the last Courier from Holland, some new differences have arisen between the Imperial and Dutch Ambassadors. M. de Mercy has declared the intention of the Emperor to establish a toll upon the Scheld, to be collected from all foreign ships navigating between Antwerp and Saftingen; and the Dutch insist upon His Majesty's recognition of their full and exclusive right from Saftingen to the Sea. These points not having been agreed to on either side, Couriers have been dispatched both to Vienna and Holland.

52. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
2 Nov. 1785.

There exists at this time a coldness (not to make use of a stronger term) so very evident between this Court and the Spanish Ambassador, that I have no doubt but some very great cause of discon-

tent has lately been given to the Court of Madrid. The Comte d'Aranda [1] has absented himself from Fontainebleau almost entirely during the voyage, and the circumstance of the indisposition of the Ambassadress, which is but slight, can hardly be interpreted as a reason for such conduct. The Chevalier Heredia has not made his appearance here at all. M. de Florida Blanca [2] has certainly much cause to be offended with the conduct of the French Ministry towards him, for I have been assured that M. de la Vauguyon received, before his departure from hence, the most particular instructions to pursue every measure that could conduce to the displacing of that Minister...

53. Hailes to Carmarthen, 9 Nov. 1785.

The definitive Treaty between His Imperial Majesty and the States General was signed last night at this place. The entire sovereignty of the Dutch on the Scheld from Saftingen to the Sea is recognized by the Emperor, and the articles 13 and 15 of the Treaty of Munster are erased. I am told that the Treaty of Alliance between this Court and the Republic will also be signed tomorrow; but if that should not be exactly the case, I have no doubt but that M. de Vergennes will precipitate the conclusion of that business as much as possible.

I fear it will not be in my power to ascertain the particulars that have occasioned the extraordinary coldness between the Courts of Versailles and Madrid so soon as I expected, the source of any intelligence being at present removed from this place: but from what I have continued to observe, I see no cause to alter the opinion I had formed when I last had the honour of mentioning the subject to your Lordship.

[1] Aranda. Don Pedro-Pablo Abarica y Bolea, Conde de Aranda, born 1718. He was a liberal minister and reformer under Charles III. After his fall in 1773 he was appointed Ambassador in Paris. He became again Prime Minister in 1792, but was disgraced and died 1779.

[2] Florida Blanca. Don Jose Monino Conde de Florida Blanca, born 1728. Minister till his fall in 1792, died 1808.

The appointment of the Duc de Polignac[1] to the place of Intendant General of the post (that is to say of the department of the Horses, which is now made separate from that of the Letters) and which is of very considerable trust and emolument, is such a mark of the Royal favour as tends to confirm the general opinion of the great credit of that nobleman and his party.

The Duc de Lauzun[2] has been playing his court of late with unusual assiduity, and it is not to be doubted that the Embassy to England is his object. Many are inclined to think he will succeed. The family of Ségur are, however, not without hopes that the Comte de Ségur,[3] now at Petersburg, may be appointed. What is more certain is that the friends of the Comte d'Adhémar will use their best endeavours to keep him as long as possible in his present post.

Monsieur,[4] His Majesty's Brother, has lately beg'd leave, as he is now without the prospect of having children himself, to adopt the Duke of Normandy, and he has offered, in consequence, to settle the whole of his estates upon the young Prince.

54. Hailes to Carmarthen, 11 Nov. 1785.

The Treaty of Alliance between France and the States General was signed yesterday. The possessions of the Dutch in the four quarters of the World are guaranteed to them by this Court. The Commercial arrangements between the two Countries will be immediately brought into discussion, and will be settled, in all probability, in the course of the winter. I have lost no time in forwarding the information of this important event to your Lordship, and I flatter myself you will be acquainted with it before the States themselves.

[1] Comte Jules de Polignac, married his celebrated wife in 1767, was made Duke in 1780, and died in Russia in 1817.

[2] Armand Louis de Gontaut, first Duc de Lauzun, then Duc de Biron, born 1747, died December 31 1793.

[3] Louis-Philippe Comte de Ségur, born 1753, Ambassador to Russia 1784-1789. He was a well known man of letters as well as a diplomat, was a member of the French Academy, died 1830.

[4] Monsieur. Comte de Provence, afterwards Louis XVIII, born 1755, died 1824.

55. Hailes to Carmarthen, 17 Nov. 1785.

We are in daily expectation of the public of an Arrêt de Conseil, that is to fix the value of the Louis d'Or at 25 Livres. This measure has been adopted in order to encourage the reimportation of the gold coin, which, on account of the late unfavourable state of exchange, has disappeared to an extraordinary degree from this Kingdom. It seems now to be much doubted whether M. de Calonne will venture to propose a Loan before the end of the year; his friends, I am told, advise him against it, and it is thought he will content himself for the present, with about sixty millions of Livres, which he will be able to make up by the sale of some new created places, and other resources of that nature. The very bad success of the last Loan of 125 millions tends much to the confirmation of this opinion.

Since the signature of the two Treaties, last week, everything wears an appearance of the most perfect tranquillity. An account I have received from Brest does not announce any extraordinary activity in that port; there are there, at present, five Ships of 110 guns, as many of 90, and seventeen of 74. Two or three ships, armées en flute, have lately sailed from thence to the West Indies. Two Ships of the Line have been completed, within this short time, at L'Orient, and another is nearly ready to be launched.

Their Majesties and the Royal Family return this day from Fontainebleau to Versailles. The Duke of Orleans[1] is so dangerously ill at his house in the Country, that, according to the last accounts, there are little or no hopes of his recovery.

56. Hailes to Carmarthen, 24 Nov. 1785.

The Arrêt de Conseil, relating to the Gold Coin of which I made mention when I had last the honour of writing to your Lordship, has not yet made its appearance, and some doubts are entertained

[1] Orleans. Louis Philippe, Duc d'Orleans, born 1725, died 1785, chiefly noticeable as a soldier.

about the effect of it. I have heard it maintained that it will be more advantageous for the Holder to melt his Louis d'Or, than to receive after the rate of 25 livres per Louis by carrying them to the mint. It appears however almost impossible that the government should take so important a step without having calculated the consequences, but at all events, if the King is to derive a benefit from the new coinage, it must be by a very considerable debasement. Notwithstanding the reports of the advanced state of the Treaty of Commerce between this Court and that of Petersburg, I have it from good authority that as yet no article whatever is agreed upon.

M. de Vergennes' successful mediation in the Imperial and Dutch dispute, and his conclusion of the alliance with the Republic are circumstances that cannot fail of increasing his reputation, and he may now be regarded as more firm in his situation than ever. Many will have it that the credit of the Baron de Breteuil is declining daily, and that he is even on the point of being dismissed, tho' I believe this opinion not to be altogether groundless, yet, as no person is pointed out for his successor, it seems probable that the change is not so near as is generally imagined...

The Duke of Orleans died on Friday last, and the Duke of Chartres...[1] succeeds to all his titles and estates. The Court went into mourning on Tuesday for twelve days.

I should not omit to mention to your Lordship that Lauzun, the messenger, told me that, whilst he was at Calais, a smuggling vessel passed between that port and Dover, having 22 brass guns, and 200 men on board. She was steering towards the West of England.

57. Hailes to Carmarthen, 1 Dec. 1785.

The Declaration which I have the honour to enclose to your Lordship appeared the day after I last wrote, and you may judge that an operation of so much importance has not failed to interest all ranks of people, the idea entertained in general that 25 Livres

[1] Chartres. Louis Philippe Duc de Chartres, better known as the Duc d'Orleans, and as Phillippe Egalite, born 1747 guillotined 1793.

were to be paid for every Louis d'Or brought into the mint, drew of course great quantities of gold to the capital, but the appearance of the Declaration, and the deduction made at the Mint from the price of every Louis d'Or wanting weight, have considerably abated the public impatience to receive the new Coin in exchange for the old. The report of so great a price to be given may have had a considerable effect in attracting the Louis that had been kept back in Foreign States; and it may be less disadvantageous, after the operation of importing them, to dispose of them here at a low rate, or even at a loss, than to send them back again. It is not possible to calculate the benefit that the King will derive from the new coinage at present.

The very heavy duty laid some time ago upon all foreign Carriages brought into this kingdom, and meant particularly to bear upon ours, being found to have been collected with great difficulty, on account of their introduction under the denomination of travelling carriages, the Government has thought it proper to publish another Arrêt de Conseil, by which every importer of a carriage will be obliged to deposit 50 per cent, for which a recognizance will be given to refund the deposit, whenever the same carriage shall be reexported. The inconvenience and even disadvantage of such a law to all travellers, and consequently to this Country, which derives so great benefit from that kind of commerce, is so very obvious, that one can hardly conceive it to have been dictated by any other spirit than that of the other late Arrêts levelled at our manufactures, and which were meant to stimulate us to a conclusion of the Commercial Treaty as soon as possible.

The shares in the new East India Company bear a premium of 115 Livres, and it may be expected that they will rise still higher. The views of the Company, at present, indeed, are not very extended, but the great encouragement given by the Government, which supplies all their Ships, makes them not altogether an unreasonable object of speculation.

The Baron de Goltz, the King of Prussia's Minister at this Court, has lately made the representations to which he was instructed by

his sovereign of the unjustifiable oppression of the Stadholder and his party in Holland; complaining at the same time of the active part taken by this Court, in fomenting the discord subsisting in the Republic. M. de Vergennes agreed in the necessity of not permitting the republican party to go to too great lengths, and even offered his interference for that purpose, but he said, at the same time, that it was but just that it should retain that superiority in affairs, which had been lost by the misconduct of the Stadholder.

There has certainly been some misunderstanding between M. de Vergennes and the Dutch Ambassadors since the signing of their Treaty, about the four millions agreed to be paid by the French Court towards the settlement of the negotiation between the Emperor and the Republic. M. de Vergennes says, that, when he offered four millions and a half, he meant Livres, and the Dutch pretend to have understood Florins. M. de Mercy declares that the latter had gone as far in their offer as seven millions and a half towards the ten demanded by the Emperor, consequently, should he now be called upon to arbitrate, he will give it against the Dutch.

Madame de la Motte has just published a memorial in answer to the charges brought against her by the Cardinal de Rohan; but there is so little appearance of probability in her allegations and the memorial itself is so ill drawn up, that the friends of the Cardinal have rather reason to be satisfied with it than otherwise. The Parliament has been assembled since the 28th, and it is expected that the hearing evidence in this cause will take up a great deal of time. M. de Suffrein is named Ambassador from the Religion of Malta to this Court, in the room of the late Bailli de Breteuil. Mons. d'Adhémar talks of returning to England by the meeting of Parliament.

The Chevalier de Boufflers left Paris a few days ago for Rochefort, where he is to embark on board a Corvette and to sail immediately for Senegal...

58. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
8 Dec. 1785.

I have to acquaint your Lordship, in answer to your last des-

patch, no 35, by Lauzun, that I have already used endeavours to come at the source of the report so assiduously propagated to prejudice the English interest at the Court of Petersburgh. I recollect, whilst I was at Fontainebleau, that M. de Struve, the Danish Chargé des Affaires, said something to me about a Russian Fleet in the Mediterranean, and a conference between M. de Vergennes and myself. I remember perfectly well that at that time I treated what he mentioned as an absurd and groundless report. I also recollect, that although we used to talk frequently with a good deal of confidence together, he seemed not to give credit to what I said to him upon that occasion.

I went yesterday to him and asked him in what shape exactly he had found that report at Fontainebleau. He told me, without difficulty or disguise, that it had been currently mentioned, that I had had a conference with the Minister in order to engage him to oppose with us the entry of the Russian Fleet into the Mediterranean. He says also that he heard at the same time, that offers of a like nature had been made to your Lordship by M. de Barthélémi in London. From the manner in which M. de Struve spoke to me at Fontainebleau, I can have no doubt but that he credited fully the former of these two opposite accounts, and in all probability wrote to his Court in that belief. He seems fully convinced now that both were without foundation.

I shall not lose sight of your Lordship's instructions to obtain what information I can about the origin of this calumny; and I agree so entirely in opinion with your Lordship respecting M. Simolin, that whether he be found to be the author of it or not, there will be very little risk of doing him an injustice by imputing it to him at all events.

A Loan of eighty millions has at last been resolved upon; the plan has passed in Council, and has been sent to the Parliament, where it meets with some difficulty. The conditions of it are: tickets of 1,000 Livres each, bearing 5 per cent interest per annum. The whole redeemable in ten years by an annual drawing, the bearer having the option of receiving the tickets drawn in money, or of converting it into annuities at 9 per cent on one life, or 8 per

cent on two lives, free of all taxes. Each ticket of 1,000 Livres to have, besides, a chance ticket to partake of a yearly drawing ; the first of 1,200,000 Livres, and the other years 600,000 Livres each ; these respective sums to be divided into prizes. This Loan is supposed to cost Government about 6½ per cent. annual interest, whereas the last Loan gives 7 per cent to the present purchaser. It is thought that it will not fill without great difficulty. M. de Calonne must have now nearly exhausted all his resources, and it seems next to impossible that he should remain in office. The expenses of Government have exceeded its income near 160 millions of Livres this year.

Strong doubts are entertained about the success of the operation of the new coinage. The new Louis are much discredited, and, I am assured, are not worth more than 22 Livres.

I have the honour to send your Lordship by this day's messenger, the Arrêt you desired relating to the establishment of the Free Ports and the American Trade.

59. Hailes to Carmarthen, 16 Dec. 1785.

M. de Moutier [1] will present tomorrow to M. de Vergennes some observations of the method of proceeding with effect towards the Commercial Arrangement ; and as he sets out with recommending the greatest candour in the negotiation, not only with a view to conciliate England, but from a perfect persuasion that it will be impossible to gain any object by surprize, or, at all events that any so attained should be assented to when the Treaty, like that of Utrecht, shall come into a parliamentary discussion ; there is the greatest reason to hope, should his plan be attended to by the Minister, that the business will be taken up and carried through in a manner that cannot fail of being agreeable to His Majesty and His Majesty's Ministers. This gentleman has been extremely assiduous ever since the peace, in collecting materials for the

[1] Eleonore Francois Elie Comte and afterwards Marquis Moustier, born 1751. He served in the embassies of Lisbon, Naples, Treves, London, United States and Berlin. He died 1817.

formation of a Great Commercial Chart, in which the probable demands on the part of both negotiating Countries are balanced, classed in columns, and carried down, according to their diminution from the articles of the first magnitude. The work indeed is as yet in an imperfect state, but in proportion as his information extends, it becomes, of course, more voluminous. A great quantity of materials has been furnished to M. de Rayneval by the Bureau des Finances, for the purpose of digesting a plan of the Treaty, but it is, I am assured, at present so uninformed a mass, that it will take much time before it can be worked into any shape.

Some regulations have lately been made for the ascertaining more exactly the imports and exports of the Kingdom. The lights hitherto derived upon the subject are from the Chamber of Commerce, established in the great Ports of France ; but as there is no centre to which the accounts are regularly communicated, very precise notions of the balance of the Trade in General have never been attained. Your Lordship will have observed that M. de Vergennes, in his letter to me, says that the multiplicity of his affairs makes it impossible for him to follow the business of the Treaty himself, and that therefore His Majesty has given full powers to M. de Rayneval for that purpose. It will no doubt strike your Lordship that the same reason should have induced that gentleman to decline the commission ; for, next to M. de Vergennes, M. de Rayneval is undoubtedtly the most responsible and the most taken up in the department of Foreign Affairs. The public has no great confidence in the abilities of M. de Rayneval, and, when the matter comes into serious discussion, I shall not be surprized to hear that it is found necessary to join somebody with him in his commission. I submit to your Lordship (and merely as a suggestion) whether a great expense of time and messengers might not be spared by the appointment of some Minister on the part of France in England, with a commission similar to Mr. Eden's.

The Parliament has refused to register the Loan of eighty Millions and a representation will be made to the King of the extraordinary and grievous expenses of this year.

The Cardinal de Rohan's affair takes a very serious turn, and there

is great reason to think that it will end very much to his prejudice. Yesterday the Parliament awarded a decret de prise de corps against him, Cagliostro, Monsieur and Madame de la Motte, and Mlle Oliva. This decree is a sort of assent or legal confirmation of the arrest executed by the King's authority, and, as it has been given in consequence of the fullest information of the circumstances of the case, the friends of the Cardinal entertain very great fears for his safety. The Baron de Breteuil, it is said, is using all his power to influence the Judges against the Cardinal, and indeed that imputation does not appear to be ill-grounded, for, were the Cardinal to be acquitted, the most serious consequences would have to be apprehended for himself, on account of the violent act of authority exercised against him.

60. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
22 Dec. 1785.

I arrived here last night. I shall make it my business to inform myself as fully as possible on the several points mentioned in your Lordship's despatch no. 26. There has not yet been time for me to collect any news myself, but the following intelligence, sent to me by Mr Hailes, I transcribe for your Lordship's information, in his own words..

The King received yesterday a deputation from the Parliament with its representation upon the subject of the new Loan ; and that body was not dismissed without a very severe reprimand for its opposition to the Royal authority. The King spoke with a great deal of warmth to the first President, and ordered, in the most express manner, the immediate registration of the Loan. Mons. de Calonne's enemies, which are very numerous, have been extremely active in stirring up this opposition of the Parliament, and throwing obstacles of every kind in his way.

It is believed, however notwithstanding, that the Loan will fill very rapidly, on account of the great difficulty that the public finds in placing money in any other manner.

I heard at Boulogne, from an English gentleman who has resided there some time that no less than two or three vessels from

the coasts of Kent and Sussex have landed every week in that port cargoes of English wool, and that this practice has been continued for several months past. The like, I understand, happens frequently at Calais. I mention this matter to your Lordship as thinking it highly deserving of the attention of Government.

61. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
29 Dec. 1785.

I will endeavour to procure the best information respecting the business you recommend to me, and I will request M. de Vergennes to communicate the particulars to M. de Rayneval, to whose immediate discretion the Court of France has thought proper to entrust such matter of investigation, towards forming a commercial Treaty between the two Countries.

I send your Lordship herewith the King's speech to the Parliament of Paris on Friday last. Many are of opinion that the Comtrolleur General will not be able to withstand the opposition the Parliament seems disposed to give to his measures, but I cannot help thinking that, so long as the King shall think proper to continue firm in His support of that Minister, very little is to be apprehended from Parliamentary efforts to remove him.

Since the sentence justifying the measures for arresting the Cardinal de Rohan there have not been any further proceedings in that matter. It is certain, however that His Eminence can never again appear at Versailles. The Maréchal, Prince de Soubise, uncle to the Cardinal, has received a private intimation that he must not any more assist at Council. The repeated mortifications which the Maréchal has suffered through the inconsiderate conduct of some of his nearest relations, have excited the compassion of all ranks of people, and may, it is thought, very likely shorten his days...

62. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
29 Dec. 1785.

I send your Lordship enclosed the Edict of the New Loan of eighty millions, which the French Government has just opened at

5 per cent. per annum, redeemable in ten years by yearly drawings of 8 millions. Every subscriber receives in exchange of his money, receipts of one thousand Livres each, which, as they come out of the wheel, he will have the option to receive in ready cash with five per cent. interest, or to constitute the same in annuities at 9 per cent. on one life or 8 per cent on two lives, free of all taxes. Besides this, each receipt of one thousand Livres that is drawn will have a chance ticket to partake of a drawing of 800 thousand Livres, divided into prizes, which will be paid in ready money. Such are the heads of that Loan, which, in appearance, cost Government but 6 per cent., but, in fact, with the charges attending it, will make it something more. It brings to the subscribers, from the probable advanced price of the chance tickets $6\frac{1}{2}$ pr cent.

63. FROM MR HAILES,
29 Dec. 1785.

Mr Hailes has found it impossible to discover the author of the report intended to operate to the disadvantage of England at the Court of Petersbourg ; but the particular intimacy that subsists between M. de Rayneval and M. de Simolin makes it highly probable that it was insiduously fabricated and circulated by them. M. de Simolin has participated in all secrets of the negociation carried on by the Cabinet of Versailles as Mediator between the Emperor and the Dutch. The uncommon confidence that Minister enjoys at this Court might be insinuated at Petersburg.

DESPATCHES FROM PARIS

JAN.-DEC. 1786

1786

1. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
2 January, 1786.

. . . . . I must not omit to mention to your Lordship that M. de Vergennes[1] is using his best endeavours to establish a good understanding between his Court and the Empress of Russia,[2] and that any steps that can tend to the accomplishment of that point will be vigilantly pursued by the Cabinet of Versailles.

I am sorry to find how alert the French minister is in this as well as in every other business in which he is engaged, even to a degree beyond what can be easily imagined, and I think it right to mention to your Lordship that he is certainly well informed with respect to what passes at the audiences you give to the several foreign ministers.

2. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
5 January, 1786.

The new loan has met with very uncommon success, and there were paid into the Royal Treasury on Monday last no less than thirty one millions of the eighty subscribed for. The Comptroller General[3] intends to propose in Council a Committee of Trade for the purpose of furnishing instructions to M. de Rayneval[4] during his negotiation of the Treaty of Commerce.

[1] Charles Gravier, Comte de Vergennes, (1717-1787) Minister of Foreign Affairs 1774.

[2] Catherine II (1729-1796) Empress of Russia 1762.

[3] Charles Alexandre de Calonne (1734-1802) Controller General 1783.

[4] Joseph Mathias Gerard de Rayneval (1746-1812).

M. de Amécourt is dismissed from his place of Rapporteur du Roi in the Parliament. This person is the most active of all M. de Calonne's enemies, and is believed to have been the principal author of the opposition to that Minister at the time of the last loan.

[P. S.] The contract of marriage between the Baron de Staal,[1] the Swedish Ambassador and Mlle Neckar[2] is to be signed by the King tomorrow at Versailles.

3. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN, (Private)
12 January, 1786.

I happened yesterday to be at Versailles and during my stay a large body of Savoyards, who had assembled at Paris, arrived there for the purpose of presenting a memorial to the king against an order which the present lieutenant had thought proper to publish respecting them. The number assembled might be computed about two thousand. His Majesty was out a-hunting, and the commanding officer thought proper to have the guard turned out and the avenues leading to Paris lined with troops. The King on his return, passing through the avenues could not conceive what such preparations meant, and on his arrival at Versailles was informed of the cause of them, upon which he immediately ordered the guards from their posts, and laughed exceedingly at the great precautions taken, adding at the same time to his Capitaine de la Garde, 'qu'il n'y avait pas de quoi fouetter un chat.' I mention this circumstance to your Lordship which may serve to give you some idea of the good disposition of the King. The Guards had also secured the Iron Gates leading to the Palace, which were immediately ordered to be thrown open. The Savoyards all returned in the evening as peaceably as they came.

4. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
19 January, 1786.

I have the honor to send your Lordship the substance of the intelligence I have already been able to collect respecting the bus-

[1] Eric Magnus, Baron de Stael-Holstein (1749-1802).
[2] Anne Louise Germaine Neckar (1766-1817).

iness you recommended to me, and I hope to have it in my power in the course of a few days to send your Lordship the account I expect to obtain from M. de Vergennes on the same subject ; in the meantime I can assure you that what I at present communicate comes from very respectable authority.

1. English ships coming into the ports of France are treated like those of the most favoured nations in alliance with France.

2. A Book of Rates of the year 1664, the Arrêt of Council of the year 1701, and a Tarif printed at Rouen in 1758, establish duties on English Goods and manufactures, and the prohibition of such as cannot be admitted to Duties ; some of the English goods that can be entered on paying a duty pay it higher than those of a similar nature coming from other countries.

3. English goods once introduced into the kingdom of France lose their origin, and consequently such as pay duty coming into Paris, are put on a similar footing with French ones.

4. The last arrêt in favour of the new East India Company gives them the exclusive right and privilege of importing India goods from any ports of India and Europe, and the Company has at this present time agents in London, Holland, Denmark, and Portugal purchasing for them.

5. Such English goods and manufactures as are allowed by the Arrêt of July 1785 to enter into France may be brought in English bottoms. English ships may trade in France from port to port on paying tonnage, Spanish ships alone are by the Family Compact exempted from that Duty.

Exclusive of the Arrêt of July last, which settles the duty upon English goods and gives a list of such as are admitted and prohibited, there are twelve private regulations made in Council to extend or restrain the effect of that Arrêt.

Ships used to come from London to the French ports with clearances from Ostend, and entered without difficulty but of late those arrived have all been seized by Fermiers Generaux as having false dispatches, and the seizures are laid before the King in Council to pronounce on their fate. The Minister has since ordered that Goods seized by the Fermiers Generaux should be released on

paying 30 per cent and ten sols per livre of the duty, which is in all 45 per cent. The proprietors have brought in a petition to have that duty reduced, which is under consideration.

5. Dorset to Carmarthen, 19 January, 1786.

The French Government has lately received advices from India which assure that everything remains in the greatest tranquillity. M. Bérard, who is at the head of the French East India Company, seems to be of opinion that the coalition between the two commercial bodies trading to the East will meet with no essential difficulty.

The great payments that the Comptroller General has lately had to make have involved him in new difficulties and he has been obliged to depart entirely from the principle he recommended a short time ago to the Caisse d'Escompte, which was on no account to increase their currency, which ought always to be kept in a just proportion to their fund. Notwithstanding which he proposed to that establishment to increase their bills, and to furnish them to the amount of 20 million of livres, for which a sum in old Louis d'ors was to be delivered at a certain future date. The Caisse d'Escompte has very prudently declined this offer.

The acquittal of M. le Maître who has been lately condemned by the Parliament for libels printed against the government and particularly against M. de Calonne, shews very evidently the dissatisfaction of that body towards the Minister of Finance. Many people of consequence are believed to be concerned in the publication of the papers printed by M. le Maitre.

The Arrêt de Conseil, of which the enclosed is a copy, proves very clearly the intentions of this government to make every effort to establish those manufactures in France which at present occasion so great a balance against them in trade.

Two unfortunate Savoyards were executed yesterday in the Place de Greve for heading a riot a few days ago in the Place Maubert. What was very particular, the Greffier did not read their sentence fearing it might create fresh disturbances. . . . . .

6. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
26 January, 1786.

. . . . . The deputation from the Parliament of Brittany has met with a very bad reception at Versailles, and it is said that they received orders to return to their own province without passing through Paris.

A frigate arrived a few days ago from Pondicherry after an uncommonly short passage, having made it in three months and ten days. I have not yet learned whether or not she brings any news of importance from that quarter.

The Comptroller General finding himself greatly deceived in his calculation upon the number of old Louis d'ors which he expected would be brought to the mint in consequence of the new coinage, which has exceeded his estimate by nearly forty millions, and not being able to furnish the necessary sum, as the Mint is not in a situation to coin sufficient to answer the public demand, he has shut it till the first of February, when it will be again opened and the old Louis received, for which will be given receipts bearing four per cent per annum interest till they are paid off. The last loan of eighty millions, notwithstanding the rapidity with which it filled, is already at par, from having borne 2 per cent premium, and it is expected to fall still lower in the course of a few days. The other funds will, no doubt, be proportionately affected. . . . . .

7. HAILES TO FRAZER,
26 January, 1786.

. . . . . I can venture to assure you, notwithstanding all the plans that have been in contemplation for the carrying on a Trade between this country and India by the way of Alexandria and Suez, that nothing essential has been done towards it, and the French government is fully convinced of the little dependence to be placed on any compact entered into with any power in that part of the world. I have been assured that no less than twenty-three begs have been cut off at Cairo within these nine years. The instability as well as the bad faith of such a government is therefore not to be

trusted to, and a caravan would be in as great danger in Egypt as in Arabia.

The conquest of Egypt in its present distracted state would not be perhaps very difficult, and I believe it has entered into the head of more than one Minister, but conquest would produce colonization and a support and expense that would more than balance the advantages of the East India trade. If I can learn anything more upon the subject I shall not hesitate to inform you.

8. Dorset to Carmarthen, 2 February, 1786.

I enclose herewith for your Lordship His Majesty's letters patent for establishing new public coining offices, which the directors of Hotel de la Monnaie have been obliged to register, notwithstanding remonstrance wherein strong objections were stated to giving receipts for old Louis bearing interest of 4 per cent. The Comptroller General meets with much opposition in all his plans and it is thought his numerous enemies will at length succeed in their wishes to obtain his demission, tho' it is probable he will maintain his ground some time longer. The new loan of eighty millions still continues to fall.

The Swedish Ambassadress, (lately Mlle Necker) was last Tuesday received in form by their Majesties and the Royal Family at Versailles. A magnificent dinner was given upon the occasion by Her Majesty to the great Officers of State and all the Foreign Ministers. The Cardinal de Rohan's[1] Tryal goes on but very slowly. He is interrogated every day, but the Parliament have as yet taken no further steps towards bringing the business to a conclusion.

9. Dorset to Carmarthen, 2 February, 1786.

I am happy to be able, according to my promise last week, to send your Lordship the following particulars respecting the naval

[1] Louis René Edouard, Cardinal de Rohan (1734-1803) implicated in the affair of the Diamond Necklace.

operations now carrying on in the several dock-yards, and likewise of the progress in the works at Cherbourg.

Orders were sent about six weeks ago to Brest, Toulon, L'Orient and Rochfort, to build as speedily as possible 22 ships of the line. The number of workmen at all these ports is considerably increased, and orders have been sent to Brest to work double tides. At Brest, (by accounts dated the 5th of January) there are 34 ships of the line and 20 frigates. A ship of 120 guns, to be called the Marie Antoinette, is on the stocks and is to be finished in the course of the summer. At Toulon, the small fleet, consisting of 6 small brigs and a sloop of war is disarmed. A frigate of 36 guns just arrived from Turkey is also disarmed. There are 14 ships of the line fit for service, 2 put off the stocks and likewise 11 frigates. In short France is at this moment straining every nerve to put her navy on the most formidable footing.

At Cherbourg, four caissons, or cones, only are laid. The great work is suspended at present on account of the season ; but in summer it is to be carried on with the utmost vigour. At this time, 700 persons are employed in bringing materials of all kinds to fill up the caissons &c, and in making frames. Twelve or fourteen vessels from 400 to 700 tons are employed in bringing timber for the works from Gottenburg, where the French have obtained an establishment for this purpose in exchange for the island of St Bartholomew. It is the opinion of all people acquainted with maritime affairs that this establishment will prove highly advantageous to France. During the approaching summer the number of hands at Cherbourg will be doubled, and the sloops to be employed in the harbour only will amount to 600. It is, however, believed by the most sensible sea-faring people that the harbour of Cherbourg can never be of much service to France, on account of the difficulty of coming in and going out, there being only 14 points of the compass that will serve for coming out, viz : from S.S.E. to S.S.W. Many people think that supposing it to be completed, the first violent gale of wind will entirely demolish it. The expense of the works, during the summer, will, it is said, amount to £100,000 per month.

10. Dorset to Carmarthen, 9 February, 1786.

The French government are intent upon the advantages that their new alliance seems to promise them in the East, and great attention is given to projects and plans for their improvement. The Treaty of Commerce between France and Holland will, it is said, be arranged by Commissaries who are shortly to be appointed for that purpose.

The King of Sweden's [1] desire of entering into an alliance with the Dutch has been made known to the Ministers here; and it is said that he has insinuated a wish to become a party to that lately signed between France and Holland, but as M. de Vergennes is very much disinclined to every measure of that nature that has the least appearance of a league, if any alliance shall be entered into between Sweden and Holland, it will be entirely separate, though probably not without the concurrence and approbation of the Court of Versailles.

The new loan of eighty millions still continues to fall, and has met with so little success that it is thought it will be necessary to have recourse to another next year. If that should be the case, it will in all probability be made by way of lottery, in order to avoid the necessity of its being registered by the Parliament.

11. Dorset to Carmarthen, 9 February, 1786.

A very extraordinary proposal has been made to the Government by Monsr. Montgolfier, [2] who has offered to undertake to construct a balloon of a certain diameter to carry sixteen persons. The project is to carry on a trade between this part and the South of France, Paris and Marseilles are the two places named. The balloon is to be freighted with plate-glasses, and the return to be made in reams of paper. M. de Calonne has hitherto received the proposal with great coolness, as M. Montgolfier requires an advance

[1] Gustavus III (1771-1792).

[2] Joseph Michel Montgolfier (1740-1810).

of 60,000 livres Tournois. It is however under contemplation, as M. Montgolfier has declared his resolution of making the offer to our government in case he does not meet with encouragement here. It is said that the Comptroller General rather discourages enterprizes of this sort, as any further progress in the art of conducting balloons might tend to prejudice the revenues of the City of Paris, which will shortly be surrounded by a wall, the cost of which is estimated at four or five millions.

12. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
16 February, 1786.

The Parliament met again yesterday on the affair of the Cardinal de Rohan, but no resolution having passed they adjourned to this day in order to determine whether his case was to be considered as ordinary or extraordinary. Should the latter be the opinion of that body, although it implies a presumption of great criminality, yet it will be of service to the Cardinal's cause, as he will be entitled to a hearing of all the evidence against him.

The storm which has been so long gathering over the administration of Monsr. de Calonne seems to threaten him more and more every day. The ill success of his two last loans, the opposition and representation of the Parliaments of Paris and Rennes, but principally the inconsiderate manner in which the operation of the new coinage was carried into execution have made him many powerful enemies. Notwithstanding all which I do not understand that his removal is likely soon to be effected.

The Government has at last accepted Monsr. Montgolfier's proposal, concerning which I had the honour of writing to your Lordship last week Thirty thousand livres are to be granted to him in advance for the experiment, and if it succeeds the whole of his expenses will be paid without any examination of his accounts; a pension will be granted to him, and every honorary recompence bestowed on him to which he can aspire. He pretends to have discovered the means of guiding his machine, but it was not till after his project to England, in case of refusal here, that it was accepted.

SHOREDITCH PUBLIC LIBRARIES

13. Dorset to Carmarthen.
23 February, 1786.

It is hardly possible to conceive a moment of more perfect tranquillity than the present; the French government, free from the late causes of its anxiety, the Imperial pacification and the Dutch alliance, appears entirely bent upon improving the advantages of peace, the necessity of the continuation of which nothing can more clearly evince than the very embarassed state of its finances and credit.

The Comptroller General is thought to be on the eve of his dismission on account of the continual checks he meets with in all his operations of finance yet his influence at Court does not appear to be at all lessened. The difficulties he meets with are chiefly owing to a personal dislike which subsists between him and the Baron de Breteuil,[1] and, in all probability, a few months will produce the removal of one of those ministers from His Majesty's Councils. I shall take the first opportunity to communicate to M. de Vergennes the contents of your Lordship's last dispatch. The courier, owing to the packet having been detained by bad weather, did not arrive till after my return from Versailles on Tuesday last.

The last loan of 80,000 millions has risen to par within the last three days.

14. Dorset to Carmarthen.
23 February, 1786.

I have the honour to send Your Lordship the resolutions of the Parliament upon the several points insisted upon by the Cardinal de Rohan. (1) The Cardinal demanded to be tried by his peers, which was refused. (2) He demanded to be tried à l'ordinaire, it was resolved that his trial should proceed à l'extraordinaire. (3) He demanded that his décret de prise de corps should be reversed, which was refused. (4) He demanded liberty to hear and to confront the evidence against him. The answer to this is deferred for

[1] Louis Auguste le Tonnelier, Baron de Breteuil (1733-1807) Minister of the Household.

the present. The Parliament broke up last friday, and will meet again some day in the week to proceed on the re-examination of the witnesses. The demands of the Cardinal to Parliament are to be printed. I send your Lordship a very curious memorial just published by the Comte de Cagliostro,[1] one of the persons in the Cardinal's affair, and who is also under confinement.

15. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
2 March, 1786.

Not having been able to see M. de Vergennes on account of the Kings having deferred receiving the foreign ministers, it will not be in my power to send your Lordship an answer on the subject of your last dispatch before next week.

Monsr. de la Tour Dupin, who is lately arrived from Senegal, gives an account of the increasing prosperity of that settlement. The orders he received from this government when he went from hence were to use the utmost vigilance to prevent the English from making any encroachments, and even, in case of resistance, to employ force to repel them. He commanded a Corvette of 22 guns, which was the only armed vessel in that part.

The new ordonnance de la Marine is expected every day to be published. Very material alterations, it is said, are made in the discipline of the navy, and many English regulations are adopted.

It is very strongly reported that the Cardinal de Rohan has written a letter to the King, acknowledging himself to have been guilty, but that he was duped, and imploring His Majesty's clemency. Cagliostro having presented a petition to the Parliament in favor of his wife, who he declares is unjustly and without any substantiated accusation against her detained in the Bastille, Monsr. Dupreminil, a Counsellor of the Parliament (after the Procureur General had attacked the petition with great asperity, and the more so on account of its informality) made a very animated speech upon the liberty of the subject, and the hardship of the present case. He then proposed to the Chambres assemblées, although they could not take public notice of the petition, on

[1] The famous impostor, died 1795.

account of its irregularity, to make use, at all events, of the information it gave them, and come to the assistance of a person unjustly imprisoned. A resolution was unanimously passed to pray His Majesty for the immediate release of the prisoner. . . . . .

16. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
9 March, 1786.

. . . . . Agreeable to M. de Vergennes' desire I have applied to him by letter on the subject of the naval force to be kept up in the East Indies. In my conversation with him upon that matter he observed to me that we have no reason to be alarmed at the connection with Holland, as the Treaty which has been entered into between the two powers is only defensive. I pressed him however to be explicit in the answer that I am to expect from him, that we may be prepared to send such a force as shall be thought expedient for the protection of our possessions in so distant a part of the world without giving umbrage to this country or to the States General. . . . . .

17. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
9 March, 1786.

Having mentioned to your Lordship in a former dispatch that the Cardinal de Rohan had written to the King acknowledging his guilt and soliciting pardon I think it right to inform you that the fact was not exactly so. It is true that the Cardinal did write to His Majesty, but in a style not at all pleasing, to demand his liberty on the presumption of having proved himself innocent of the charges alleged against him. It is said that no answer will be returned to his letter, and that, in all probability, he will remain under his present confinement till the whole of the trial is gone through, which it is expected will not be finally concluded before Whitsuntide.

The enclosed extract of a letter from the Pope to the King has given great umbrage at Versailles. It appears that His Holiness will not find it an easy matter to persuade His Most Christian Majesty to an acknowledgement of any right whatever over his

subjects. The delay of the arrival of a Nuncio is therefore not to be wondered at, and it is probable that no Minister from His Holiness will be received till these matters shall have been arranged to the satisfaction of this Court.

The Bailli de Suffren[1] has had his audience of their Majesties and the Royal Family as Ambassador from Malta. Mr Jefferson,[2] the American Minister, left Paris last Monday, having been sent for by Mr Adams.[3] It is strongly reported that the King of Prussia[4] is in a very bad state of health and that his physicians are of opinion that he cannot last long.

18. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
23 March, 1786.

. . . . . The Cardinal de Rohan's affair draws near to a conclusion, and it is thought there will have been evidence sufficient to hang Madame de la Motte.[5] Cagliostro and his wife will certainly be sent out of the kingdom, and His Eminence perhaps be censured by the Parliament and divested of all his ecclesiastical preferments. The Pope, it is said, is determined to fix some stigma on the Cardinal for having consented to be tried by the Parliament, and will moreover, it is thought, require the restitution of the Hat, a measure which cannot fail of giving great offence to the King, and may probably provoke him to the resolution of not allowing any of the French clergy to accept of that dignity in future. . . . . .

[P. S.] I enclose to your Lordship the Treaty of Peace between the Emperor and the Dutch, and likewise the Treaty of Alliance between France and Holland.

[1] Pierre André, Bailli de Suffren de Saint Tropez, (1726-1788) nominated Bailli by the Grand master of Malta.

[2] Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) President of the United States 1801-1809.

[3] John Adams (1735-1826) President of the United States 1797-1801. Now in Prussia.

[4] Frederic the Great, (1712-1786).

[5] Jeanne de Luz de Saint Rémy de Valois, Comtesse de Lamotte (1706-1791).

19. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN.
30 March, 1786.

I enclose to your Lordship the remonstrance of the Parliament against the new coinage, and likewise a copy, which I have with great difficulty obtained, of the King's answer. I cannot too strongly recommend to your Lordship the perusal of the former, as it contains the most incontrovertible reasons against that ill-executed operation.

I have heard nothing from Monsr. de Vergennes since I last wrote to your Lordship, but I have reason to think that he has conferred with the Dutch Ambassadors on the subject of my letter relative to the naval force the States General intend to keep up in the East Indies. It is probable that I shall not for some time obtain an answer.

Colonel Edward Dillon is going immediately to Constantinople and is to visit Egypt before his return. He expects that he will be absent about 10 months. I cannot directly discover the object of his mission, but M. de Vergennes evidently has in view some plan for opening a communication with the East Indies through that part of Africa, and I make no doubt that Mr Dillon is instructed to examine into the practicability of it. . . . . .

20. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
6 April 1786.

I send your Lordship enclosed a copy of the answer I have received from M. de Vergennes to my letter related to the Naval Force His Most Christian Majesty might propose to keep up in the East Indies, the purport of which is nearly what I hinted to your Lordship in my dispatch of the 9th of last month.

I have mentioned to that Minister the wishes of His Majesty respecting Sir William Petty's [1] survey of Ireland. He has promised me that an immediate enquiry shall be made, and that he will communicate to me the King His Master's pleasure upon it.

[1] Sir William Petty, (1623-1687) doctor, Member of Parliament, economist. The Survey of Ireland was published after his death in 1692.

The Cardinal's trial is retarded a little owing to another accomplice of Madame de la Motte, named Villette, being taken up. Till his evidence shall have been confronted with that of others the proceedings will undergo some delay. The Cardinal's memoire is every day expected, to appeal. As soon as it is published I will send it to your Lordship, together with others no less interesting. Madame de la Motte, from an apprehension that her life is in danger, affects to have lost her senses. The jailer, upon entering her room the day before yesterday, was some time before he discovered her, and at length found her under her bed, quite naked. In consequence of this, strict orders have been given that she is at no time to be left without a sentinel in her room.

Mr. Eden[1] had his audience on Tuesday of Their Majesties and of the Royal Family. That Minister will, I take for granted, acquaint your Lordship with the particulars of his reception, and likewise of his conferences with M. de Vergennes and M. de Rayneval. Nothing further has been done in regard to the Treaty of Commerce between this Court and Russia. M. de Simolin has not been consulted upon that matter, and is totally ignorant in what degree of forwardness it is. Another loan is talked of, to take place about the month of June, but no particulars are as yet known. A strong discussion subsists in the Cabinet between the Baron de Breteuil and Monsr. de Calonne, a few months must decide which of these ministers is to prevail.

21. Dorset to Carmarthen
13 April, 1786

The Rhingrave of Salm has been at Versailles two or three times, and, without having been presented at Court, has seen M. de Vergennes, but not any of the other ministers. The object of his journey hither is certainly to sound the disposition of the Cabinet of Versailles in regard to the Stadtholder,[2] who has by no means the countenance of the administration, tho' the cautious policy of

[1] William Eden, Lord Auckland (1750-1814). He had come to negociate the Treaty of Commerce.

[2] William V of Orange (1751-1806).

M. de Vergennes does not permit him to discover his real sentiments at the present moment. The French look upon the Prince of Orange with a vindictive eye, on the persuasion that he prevented, towards the close of the late war in 1782, the sailing of the Dutch fleet, at the time when our large Fleet of Merchantmen, which was known to have sailed from the Baltic, might have been intercepted.

The King of France is very much displeased with the Court of Naples, and has recalled his Minister. Your Lordship will, no doubt, hear from better authority than mine the cause of his displeasure. I can only assure your Lordship that the Court of Naples is at this moment greatly alarmed, so much so that Her Sicilian Majesty has sent a confidential Person to Her Sister to solicit the intercession of this Court with his most Catholic Majesty.[1] How far the King of France may feel himself justified to meddle in this business it is impossible to say, considering the present feeble state of the Spanish Monarch[2] but it is probable that something will be done to soften the rigour of his disposition towards Their Sicilian Majesties.[3] The Queen of Naples recovers but slowly from her last lying in, the agitation of her mind is supposed to have contributed greatly to retard her recovery.

I expected to be able to send your Lordship, by this day's messenger, a state of the shipping in the Harbour of Toulon, but the Person who had engaged to procure me this intelligence has disappointed me ; I have therefore only to hope that I shall be more fortunate again next week.

There is a great dearth of news at present. The motions of the Court depend entirely upon Her Majesty's lying in sometime in the month of July, after which preparations will be made for removing to Fontainebleau.

I send your Lordship all the Memoires that have hitherto appeared relative to the Cardinal de Rohan's business ; that of his Eminence is expected to be published in a few days. The Parliament is at present at Vacation, which will continue for a fortnight ; of course

[1] Maria Carolina, Queen of Naples, (1752-1814) sister of Marie Antoinette.
[2] Charles III King of Spain 1759-1788.
[3] Ferdinand V (1751-1826) was King of Naples at this time.

all proceedings are stopped during that time. In searching M. de la Motte's Villa near Paris, several papers were found which, it is said, throw some new light upon this extraordinary intrigue and tend in a great measure to exculpate the Cardinal.

22. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN
20 April 1786.

. . . . . The brokers, (Agens de Change) upon whom M. de Calonne expected to raise 100,000 livres, each, by the renewal of their privileges, are to hold a meeting to morrow, in consequence of an agreement entered into amongst themselves not to give more than 50,000, so that, in case the brokers hold firm to their present resolution, the Minister will not be able to raise more than three millions by this operation. Two new loans are determined on. One of 30 millions of livres by way of lottery, the terms of which are not yet known, is to take place in the course of next month. The other of 24 millions, to be made by the Hotel de Ville (Town House), is to consist of life rents at 9 per cent on one life, and 7 ½ per cent on two lives. The money arising from this last loan is to be appropriated to the purchase of the Houses on the Pont Nôtre Dame and the Pont au Change, it having been resolved to take down those houses, upon which the workmen have already begun.

By the last letters, as well private as public from Berlin the King of Prussia's state of health is represented to be so bad that it is thought he cannot possibly last much longer.

23. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
27 April, 1786.

A disagreement happened on Sunday last between two members of the Council, in presence of the King, which terminated highly to the satisfaction of the one and to the humiliation of the other. The project of bringing the small river the Yvette to Paris, for the purpose of supplying the City with water, is favoured by the Baron de Breteuil ; and the water which is brought from the Seine for that purpose by the water-company under the direction of Perrier is patronised by M. de Calonne, who, with his friends, is believed

to have a considerable share in the stock of that company.

On Sunday, when the Baron de Breteuil came to the Council, he brought an instrument (letters patent) ready drawn up for the King to sign, empowering M. de Ter, the person who has formed the plan of the Yvette, to begin his works. M. de Calonne, who but a short time since had reprimanded very severely M. de Ter for having published a small tract to explain the nature of his undertaking, and had used every means to put a stop to the circulation of that publication, was extremely surprised at finding the Baron de Breteuil had advanced so far in his business as to promise him the King's letters patent, and without his knowledge. M. de Calonne asked the King in the presence of all the other ministers if his Majesty was satisfied with his conduct as Comptroller General. The King answered in the affirmative. M. de Calonne then said he hoped His Majesty, being in that gracious disposition towards him, would be pleased to spare him the humiliation of seeing his department interfered in by another Minister. He said that the province of all canals and the interior Navigation belonged to him, and that therefore he was astonished that His Majesty's Minister for Paris should have usurped a right that only belonged to him. He attacked the project of the Yvette and said that on every account he must oppose it, but particularly for the insalubrity of its water.

The Baron was so unprepared that he made no answer, tho' it seems that, having the department of Paris, to which city the water was intended to be brought, he has as much right as the other Ministers to interfere. He made no defence whatever, tho' he was roundly reprimanded by the King for having attempted to surprise him into the granting of the Letters Patent.

24. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
27 April, 1786.

Mons. de Vergennes acquainted me last Tuesday that His Most Christian Majesty had been pleased to consent to copies being taken of the maps of the Survey of Ireland by Sir William Petty, but that the original ones could by no means be given up. M. Le

Noir, under whose direction this business immediately lies, has informed M. de Vergennes that the books shall be taken down and left for the inspection of any artist whom His Britannic Majesty may think proper to appoint for that purpose. I must therefore desire your Lordship will take the King's orders upon this matter, whether a person is to be sent from England, or whether it is His Majesty's pleasure that I should look out for an able artist here to be employed in copying the said maps.

The City of Paris has been greatly alarmed by an apprehension of distress on account of the scarcity of provisions, especially butchers meat. Beef is risen from 11 and 12 sols a pound to 16 sols ; many of the butchers have in consequence shut up their shops. The difficulty still subsists in a great degree, but it is expected that it will shortly be removed, Couriers having been dispatched into Poictou and Normandy to hasten the arrival of cattle. The Government is nevertheless not a little alarmed, as the live stock of all these provinces is so much diminished within these two years, owing to the extreme dryness and backwardness of these two last seasons. Tho' a temporary relief may be obtained by the precautions that have been taken, yet future difficulties are apprehended, which may prove exceedingly distressing to so large and populous a Capital as Paris.

The following intelligence respecting the Port of Toulon has just been delivered to me. No ship of the Line is in commission. Twenty ships of the line ready, which might be fitted out in a short time. The Arsenal and Storehouses are in good condition and well stocked, and the greatest attention is observed in every department. There are several large Frigates, from 36 to 40 guns, now building ; two were launched about two months ago. No squadron is to put to sea from that Port this summer. The police there is uncommonly strict, and no ship whatever can enter the harbour without examination, on which account it is very difficult to obtain any intelligence of what is going on in the Dock-Yard.

It is with great satisfaction I learn from M. de Vergennes that the Treaty of Commerce, which Mr. Eden is negotiating at this Court, has thus far in its progress succeeded so favourably as

to promise a termination of it mutually beneficial to the two countries. The language of that minister, upon this subject, was such as I must own gave great pleasure, and corresponded entirely with the information I had received from Mr. Eden.

25. Dorset to Carmarthen.
4 May 1786.

Since I had last the honour of writing to your Lordship, the Comte d'Artois [1] has declared his intention of visiting the works at Cherbourg, whither he proposes going the latter end of this month, to be present at the fixing of one of the cones. The Government entertain the greatest hopes of the success of this undertaking, and many of the most sanguine of the French nobility go so far as to say that it will be a means of establishing a permanent peace between the two nations, as we shall, under the awe of a commodious harbour for a large fleet in sight of our coasts, always be averse to war. Such is now the general opinion of this undertaking, of which last year the success was much doubted. I send your Lordship enclosed an Edit du Roi, containing the creation of certain new offices to receive the taxes of the City of Paris, by which means the Comptroller General has raised the sum of 134,000 livres tournois. The King is going to appoint two Treasurers in Holland to pay the dividends of the French funds to the Dutch, which have hitherto been paid in France. Messrs Botereau and Van Stophorst are the persons named for that business. Two or three Paymasters of the life rents due to the Dutch also to be sent to Holland to pay the life rents that nation has in France. The plan is set on foot to increase the confidence of the Dutch in the French Funds with a view of producing a preference in their favour over those of England, and of opening a market at Amsterdam for the purchase and sale of French Stock in the same manner as that already established for the English Funds.

The Treaty of Commerce, now under negotiation between England and France, has excited great curiosity amongst the Corps Diplo-

[1] Charles Philippe, Comte d'Artois (1757-1830) younger brother of Louis XVI, afterwards King Charles X.

matique, and it is natural to imagine that the respective Ministers of the different Courts of Europe are endeavouring to oppose its progress; but it may be hoped that the Cabinet of Versailles will be brought to understanding that a liberal intercourse with great Britain is the surest means of securing general peace and tranquility. It is said that great pains are taking to induce the Spaniards to accede to the Dutch Treaty, but that hitherto the Spanish Minister has set his face against it. Of this, however, Mr Liston's[1] last dispatches by Basilico have no doubt given your Lordship more full and accurate information than I can possibly possess. What I have mentioned on the subject is only the common report here.

26. Dorset to Carmarthen.
11 May 1786.

I am much disappointed at not being able to give your Lordship some account of the actual state of shipping in Brest harbour. The person I employed has not received the intelligence he expected, but gives me hopes of being able to acquaint me with several particulars in respect to that port in the course of next week.

I send your Lordship Cardinal Rohan's petition to the parliament of Paris which is not yet allowed to be printed here. With it I enclose also a memoir from the Sieurs Vaucher and Logue in answer to the Baron de Fages. I would recommend them both to your Lordship's perusal, especially the Memoire, which is one of the best drawn up of those that have lately appeared. Nobody can guess at the turn the Cardinal's affair may take. It is said that the Attorney General's report, which has not yet been published, is much against him, yet upon the whole the public opinion is greatly in his favour. The conclusion of this extraordinary intrigue is fixed for Whitsuntide.

I have not seen M. de Vergennes these last ten days, the King not having received the Foreign Ministers last Tuesday, on account of the review of the French and Swiss Guards on that day. The regiments made a very fine appearance.

[1] Robert Liston was ambassador in Spain 1781-1788.

27. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN.
1 June 1786.

Yesterday evening the Parliament, after many hours deliberation, came to a decision upon the affair for which Cardinal de Rohan has been so long detained in the Bastille. By the judgement of that body the Cardinal is discharged from the whole of the accusation that had been exhibited against him, and a permission is given to print and publish the Arrêt by which he is absolved. An order is at the same time issued for the suppression of all the memorials against him and Cagliostro as false and injurious. The decision was carried by 27 to 22. The Conseillers Clercs (the Clergy) were not allowed to vote. Madame de la Motte is condemned to be whipped and branded upon both shoulders and imprisoned for life. M. de la Motte is also condemned to the same punishment for contumacy. Villette to perpetual banishment. Cagliostro is discharged from the whole of the accusation, and Mlle Oliva is declared innocent and set at liberty. It is to be observed that, according to the letters patent, by which the Parliament was directed to take cognizance of this affair, the Royal injunction went only to the determination of the fact of the fraudulent acquisition of the diamonds, the Cardinal's indiscretion making no part of the offence of which they were to judge.....

[P. S.] It is not known in what manner the King will act in regard to the Cardinal, who still remains under confinement in the Bastille.

28. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN
8 June 1786.

The King, having resolved upon visiting the works carrying on at Cherbourg, has signified his intention of setting out from Versailles the 21st of this month for that purpose. His Majesty proposes to return by Caen, Havre de Grace and Rouen, and will be absent eight days.

The Cardinal's affair is at length formally concluded. He left

Paris last Monday, and is gone, by the King's order, to an Abbaie [1] of his own in Auvergne, there to remain during His Majesty's pleasure. Madame de la Motte is to undergo in the course of next week the punishment in which she was sentenced by Parliament, and is to be shut up for life in a prison (the name of which I do not recollect) in Brittany. Villette is, according to his sentence, banished the kingdom, as Cagliostro is likewise, by the King's command. Mlle Oliva will be set at liberty, but not immediately.

Monsr de Calonne shewed me the other day a new edict which in effect takes off the duty upon carriages, tho' the words of it do not immediately so express. This is one of the several proofs I have lately experienced of the disposition of this Court to be upon an amicable footing with Great Britain. Another very strong instance appeared not long since upon an application from me to the Minister in behalf of Chippendale and Co, merchants in London, for an order to apprehend two notorious swindlers, at that time at Brest under false names. My request was granted without any delay whatever, and Chippendale was immediately furnished with orders for the Commandant at that port, by which the delinquents were to be delivered into his custody in order to their being taken back to England.

29. Dorset to Carmarthen
15 June 1786.

As I shall see your Lordship so soon, I have at present only to acquaint you that the King's journey to Cherbourg will take place the 21st. A squadron of evolution from Brest, to be commanded by M. Albert de Rioms, consisting of the Patriotte of 74 guns and about 16 frigates and sloops which are to assemble at that Port, will sail from thence to meet the King at Cherbourg, and afterwards proceed to Havre de Grace. His Majesty is to embark at Honfleur for Havre in a cutter commanded by Mons. de la Touche. The passage is about three leagues. A Frigate upon a new construction

[1] Chaise Dieu (Casa Dei), a Benedictine Abbey founded by St. Robert in the ninth Century.

is to be launched at Havre in presence of His Majesty, who returns to Versailles on the 29th. . . . . .

30. Hailes to Carmarthen
22 June 1786.

Although many months have elapsed since your Lordship did me the honour to write to me on the subject of a French establishment at Acheen, in the Island of Sumatra, I have not lost sight of what then you so particularly recommended to me, but, on the contrary, have used my best endeavours to find out if any plan of that nature really existed. It was not till the other day, upon my making fresh enquiries concerning it, that I learned, from a quarter which I think may be depended upon, that a proposal had been made by a certain government to the Minister at Vienna for the cession of the Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal, together with the Imperial Factories on the coast of Malabar. I was assured that the promise had been given that it should be taken into consideration. What the equivalent offered is I know not, but I cannot but be persuaded, from the manner in which the circumstance of the proposal came to my knowledge, that either the French or the Dutch are the bidders for those settlements; and it is in that opinion, and from the importance of such views, that I take the earliest opportunity of sending your Lordship intimation of my intelligence. I need not remark upon the situation of the Nicobar Islands, commanding the entrance into the straits of Malacca, and if joined with Trincomalee, likely to render truly formidable the French and Dutch power in the Bay of Bengal. I doubt not that your Lordship will be inclined, as well as myself, to give credit to this account, should you not (as I have not) hear anything of the prosecution of the French Plan for a settlement at Acheen.

On Tuesday His Majesty set out for Rambouillet, intending to proceed from thence to Harcourt, and from Harcourt to Cherbourg. The Marechal de Castries [1] and the Marechal de Segur [2] are the only

[1] Charles Eugène Gabriel de la Croix, Marquis de Castries, (1727-1801) fought at Rosbach.

[2] Philippe Henri Marquis de Ségur (1724-1801) father of the historian.

Ministers that attend him. The Foreign Ministers have received notice that the King will not receive them before the 4th of July, but he will be absent for no more than eight days. The journey seems to be intended to give fresh encouragement to the great work now carrying on at Cherbourg and indeed, if we may judge from the zeal and activity already shewn as well as from the very extraordinary concurrence of the several Ministers of the Cabinet in the undertaking, we may conclude that it will not be easily abandoned. On the other hand it is to be observed, notwithstanding all the favourable circumstances under which the work has been begun and continues to be carried on, that a very small part of it has taken up three whole years. The most sanguine well-wishers to it cannot reckon upon more unanimity and more encouragement in the course of its prosecution than it has hitherto met with, therefore, to calculate from what has already been done with such extraordinary efforts, we may reasonably conclude that it cannot be perfected but at a most oppressive expense to the public, and in a very considerable length of time. The language of the public, and I believe it is adopted from the members of the Administration, is, that the Port of Cherbourg is undertaken with a view to ensure the duration of peace between the two nations.

Your Lordship must not be surprised at the very sudden and extraordinary rise in the price of the shares of the East India Company, that circumstance not having been occasioned by any favourable event happening to the Company itself, but merely by a manœuvre of three enterprising speculators in the Public Funds. The whole number of shares, amounting to 17,000, were bought up by three people at about 1200 livres each share, and upon different reports spread by them to the advantage of the Company, and credited by ignorant individuals, the shares rose from 1260 to 1600 livres, and left the adventurers in possession of a gain of near five millions of livres. Your Lordship may conclude from this that the Arrêt that was published about a year ago against gaming in the funds has produced no great effect; indeed speculators of this sort seem to be more frequent than ever, and I am assured that estates are upon sale all over the Kingdom for

the purpose of supplying the means of carrying on this pernicious practice.

Yesterday morning early, Mme de la Motte was brought out of her prison into the great Court of the Palais, where she underwent the punishment of whipping and branding, according to the sentence of the Parliament. Her behaviour on this occasion was conformable to that shewn on her trial. She used the most reproachful language against the Cardinal and her judges, and made so much resistance to the executioner that no less than four people were employed to hold her. Immediately after the infliction, which is more infamous than painful, Madame de la Motte was conveyed to the Salpetrière. The unprejudiced part of the public now begin to do justice to the conduct both of the Court and the Parliament in the whole affair of the Cardinal. The moderation of the former it is allowed, reflects great honour on the Sovereign, and the impartial investigation and unbiassed decision of the latter will no doubt support the falling credit of French jurisprudence. The late condemnation of three innocent persons to the wheel by the Parliament of Paris had brought the criminal justice of the country into the greatest disrepute, and it has fixed an indelible stain on the character of that body.

31. Hailes to Carmarthen, 29 June 1786.

I should have waited upon M. de Vergennes immediately upon receipt of your Lordship's dispatch by Lauzun, and its enclosures, had I not thought that the business recommended to you by the mortgagees of Tobago might be forwarded by the information I expect to obtain upon the subject from Count Dillon, who is shortly going to take upon himself the government of that island. I hope to see that gentleman tomorrow, and I flatter myself that I shall be able to learn from him what the motives are that induced the French Government to act so much in contradiction to the policy avowed in the preamble of the Edict of 1783, and in violation of the 7th article of the definitive Treaty, with the spirit of which that Edict entirely conforms. I doubt not but I shall be

enabled to judge from the Count's conversation what difficulties am likely to encounter in obtaining the Act which alone can secure to the British mortgage, his interest in the property of the Island. Your Lordship may be assured that I shall endeavour with no less zeal to obtain from the French Ministry the Arrêt or Ordinance necessary to establish a reciprocity of advantage between the creditors of either country, in pursuit of the recovery of their just debts. I cannot however but express my apprehension of much delay if not difficulty in carrying a point of this nature, and that chiefly on account of the procrastinating disposition of the Garde des Sceaux, to whom it will most probably be referred. It is now more than a year since the Minister was applied to by the Embassy to decide whether English debtors were or were not to be protected by the French laws against Actions brought by Creditors of their own nation. The question was submitted to the Garde des Sceaux, but the point still continues in a state of indecision ; and the Minister prefers rather to submit to the constant trouble of granting Sauf-conduits to every Englishman who asks them, than to bring the head of the Law Department to a positive determination about it. But, what is very remarkable is that during this time (whether it proceeds from the inconsistency of the laws themselves or from those intrusted with the execution of them I know not) many English debtors have been arrested and their effects seized, after a very summary process, at the suit of English Creditors. On quitting this subject I must beg to be allowed the further liberty of observing that the protection of the Court is in this country of so much more weight than the laws, that it requires no more than a short rescript from the Baron de Breteuil to defeat the operation of any Arrêt or Ordinance of the nature required, and it is on that account I fear that the American Debtors will at all times be able (by means of favour) to escape from their English Creditors. This corrupt practice is so common among the French themselves that there can be but little doubt of its becoming equally, if not more, general, amongst foreigners.

There lately arrived at L'Orient, from the East Indies, a ship, called the Mount Carmel, which brings an account of disagreements

between the French and the English in Bengal. Two French vessels, laden with salt, attempting to sail up the Ganges, were stopt and fired upon by the English forts on that river; the English pretending to the sole right of the disposal of that commodity, and the French insisting on their entire freedom of trade in those parts. I have heard nothing of any official account of this event, nor has it as yet been publicly spoken of. Several English persons, servants of the East India Company, I understand are arrived on board this ship. Your Lordship, in all probability, is fully informed of the whole of this affair. At present this is all we know concerning it.

The French East India Company have sent out eleven ships this year, and, as the late accounts from India have described that country as drained of all its specie by the large remittances made to China, the Company have thought it proper to send out about 100,000 in one ship, and 160,000 in another, with which sums they expect to make very beneficial bargains.

The dispute between the King and the Parliament of Bordeaux occasions a great deal of animadversion in the public. The Court, contrary to the opinion of some of the Ministers, and, I understand, particularly of M. de Calonne, has thought fit to appropriate to itself all the lands which have been dry by the course of the Garonne, and other rivers watering that Generality. The Parliament looks upon the Act of the Court as an usurpation and an infringement of the jus publicum. The Arrêt which it has published annuls the King's letter patent, by which a grant is made of the lands to a particular Company, and launches out into violent and even indecent invective against His Majesty's advisers to the measure. It seems to be uncertain yet what turn this affair will take.

The King arrives this day from Cherbourg. His great affability to all ranks of people during his journey has made him extremely popular in the provinces he has passed through.

32. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
6 July, 1786.

The result of my enquiries as to the intentions of this Government

with respect to the Mortgagees of the Island of Tobago has been such as, I flatter myself, will warrant my having delayed the application your Lordship directed me to make to the Minister upon that subject. The Maréchal de Castries, who has in his department the administration of the colonies, is very naturally apprehensive of losing the revenue which he hoped to derive from the Island of Tobago, on account of the debts in which the principal proprietors are involved. But he is notwithstanding, I believe, fully convinced of the necessity of standing by the Treaty. A plan of administration for the Island has been offered to him, according to which the debt (amounting to about 22 millions of livres) might be paid off in about ten years. But to this end it is absolutely necessary for the Minister so far to concur in so beneficent an operation as to exonerate the Island for that term of all the expenses of government. I am assured by Count Dillon, (who sails at the end of the month for Tobago) that the Marechal has now in contemplation an ordonnance by which provision will be made for the discharge of the debt, but with such reduction of interest as took place by the Act of Parliament 1774, and in this he pretends to act in strict conformity with English law. But in order more effectually to assist the proprietors of the Island, the Government of France is to become security for the sum of 8 millions, to be raised in Holland by them at 4½ per cent, and that sum is to be applied towards the extinction of the debt. M. de St. Laurent, the Administrateur of Tobago, is a very active man, and I learn that he has lately been able to persuade the Spanish Minister to consent to the making a free port in the Island of Trinidad. He is now soliciting the Marechal de Castries to grant the same advantage to Tobago, and, as it is expected that he will succeed, very great benefit will, in all probability, be derived from the trade that will be carried on with Spanish Amerika through the medium of the Spanish Island. After having made your Lordship acquainted with these circumstances, I shall hope for your further instructions, but I must not omit to inform you, from what I have been able to collect, that the Minister will be very unwilling to agree to the publishing of any Arrêt of the nature required by the Mortgagees.

I made on Tuesday the application to M. de Vergennes for an Arrêt or Ordinance by which English debtors might be enabled to carry with effect their actions for debts contracted out of France into the French tribunals, and I said (as I had the honour of being instructed by your Lordship) that as the law now stood in England, we might expect that the advantage might be made reciprocal to us. M. de Vergennes would by no means admit that the recovery of debts, contracted in France was possible in England, and I found him so steady in his opposition to my proposal, that I am fully convinced that he can never be brought to acceed to it unconditionally. He said however that he should be very ready to concur in any plan for the accommodation both of the civil and criminal jurisprudence of the two nations to each other, but that in that respect he could only meet me on the ground of perfect reciprocity.

The whole body of the parliament of Bordeaux has received orders to come to Versailles without passing through Paris. Such an act of severity in displacing so great a number of magistrates from the seat of their most material concerns, is without example ; but, although it is generally believed that many of them will be exiled on account of the offensive form of their proceedings, the main point for which they have contested will be given up to them. The Parliament of Toulouse, whose cause is the same as that of Bordeaux, on account of the course of the rivers in that part, has passed a similar law in opposition to the Court. Indeed, it may be said to be the common cause of the whole kingdom to oppose the Crown's appropriation to itself of those lands which may happen to be left dry by the change of the course of its rivers.

I understand that the Court of Madrid demands as a condition of its accession to the Treaty of Alliance between France and Holland, that the full and free navigation to the Cape and in India should be confirmed to Spain. The mediation of this Court between those of Madrid and Naples seems to take no very favourable turn, altho' frequent Couriers are sent backwards and forwards.

A few days since, the Dauphin, a ship belonging to the East India Company, arrived at l'Orient from China, and is said to have

brought a cargo worth five millions of livres. This event is much spoken of, and it is said it will give a very advantageous turn to the Company's affairs. But it is a natural reflexion to make that if the arrival of a single ship can create much sensation it must be proof that the condition of the Company is not very flourishing. His Majesty arrived in perfect health on Thursday last from Cherbourg. The Queen is expected to lie in in the course of a few days. The Court goes into mourning that is to last three weeks for the King of Portugal [1] on Monday next.

The Marechal de Soubise [2] is restored to his place in the Council from which he had been absent since the commencement of the Cardinal de Rohan's affair. This morning the Earl of Northington died in the city after a very long illness.

33. Hailes to Carmarthen.
9 July 1786.

. . . . . I was greatly surprised to find M. de Vergennes entirely ignorant of the event that has happened in India, and the more so as M. de Rayneval, who was present at our interview, had heard of it and even knew the name of the ship (La Bengale) which had brought the news of it to L'Orient. M. de Vergennes has promised me to apply to the Marechal de Castries in order to learn from him if he has received any account of the affair. In the mean time he has desired me to beg your Lordship will have the goodness to transmit to France such detail as Government may have received of it in England, for the purpose of comparing the two accounts together. M. de Vergennes assures me that he has no doubt but that the King his Master will readily comply with His Majesty's requisition for an enquiry to be made into the conduct of those who may have been concerned, on the part of the French, in the dispute and in answer to the assurances I gave him of His Majesty's firm intensions of adhering not only to the letter but to the spirit of the 12th Article of the Definitive Treaty, in regard to the freedom of

[1] Peter III, King (1777-1786), died June 25.

[2] Charles de Rohan, Prince de Soubise, Maréchal since 1758, head of the House of Rohan.

French trade in India, he said that he did not apprehend that any little mercantile disagreement, arising from the avidity natural to that class of people, was at all likely to lessen the good understanding now subsisting between the two nations; and the more especially, as the 13th article, which stipulates that the French shall enjoy the liberty of trade on the coasts in our possession, in the same manner and extent as it was formerly enjoyed by their East India Company,is extremely clear and liable to no misinterpretation.

34. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN.
13 July 1786

. . . . . M. de Vergennes has spoken to the Marechal de Castries about the account arrived here from India of the dispute between the English and the French, and he finds it not to be an official one. He again expressed his desire to be made acquainted with that which had been received in England, as soon as convenient The ship's company of the Dauphin, lately arrived at L'Orient, brings a complaint of the officers and men of the Barwell, which ship they met with at Vampoo in China. Two or three of the officers of the Barwell went one day on board the Dauphin, and, in the name of the whole crew, challenged the French to fight. According to M. Berard, who is at the head of the East India Company, and from whom I learn this account, no provocation whatever had been given to the English, and the unexpected and hostile proposal is supposed to have been made out of jealousy of the French trade in that quarter. The French dismissed the English officers from their ship and declined the combat, but a few days afterwards, part of the French crew having occasion to go on shore, they were attacked by the English and treated as if the two nations had been at war. Several of the French were wounded, and among the rest a lieutenant of the name of Vigoureux. Nothing of this circumstance has been mentioned to me at Versailles. . . . . .

35. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN.
20 July 1786.

. . . . . It has been currently reported for some days past that the

Stock of the East India Company was to be increased either by a loan or by the creation of an additional number of shares but I have good reason to believe that such reports have been fabricated only for the purpose of stockjobbing, that practice being now carried on to so ordinate an extent, that the mercantile people begin to lose all confidence in each other ; and there can be no doubt, should it continue, that it will have the most fatal effects upon the commerce of the country. The manœuvres that are employed in raising and bringing down the prices of Stocks in this City are endless and often in the highest degree extraordinary. And, as it is worthy remark that although it be known that an operation, depending solely upon the will of a minister, may be changed from day to day, yet so great is the confidence of the speculators in their own opinions and information, that they risk everything upon them. I was assured yesterday by a person employed in one of the most capital mercantile houses in Paris that the contagion of public gaming was becoming so universal that he no longer knew whom to trust to. Individuals were one day possessed of immense fortunes and the next reduced to insolvency, and that very often to the ruin of many honest and industrious families. People of the highest rank, depending upon the means of better information, are also deeply concerned in these speculations, and contribute much to the detriment of trade and credit.

The existence of a Treaty of Commerce between the King of Prussia and the United States has always been considered as very problematical here, and M. de Vergennes, but a short time ago, was entirely ignorant of it. I can now assure your Lordship, with great certainty, that the ratification of that Treaty is daily expected in Europe.

On Sunday last the Marechal de Castries delivered a letter to the King, which he had just received from M. de la Peyrouse,[1] dated the 15th of November last, from the Island of St. Catherine on the coast of Brazil. That officer speaks of no new discovery, nor of any thing important having happened during his voyage. Both

[1] Jean François Galaup de la Pérouse, (1741-1787) famous navigator.

the ships companies were in good health, and they left the Island of St. Catherine on the 17th of the same month.

Everything wears an appearance of the most profound tranquillity, and I have the greatest pleasure in repeating the wish His Majesty did me the honour to express to me a few days since for its continuance. In speaking of his late journey, he said he had been told that the cannon at Cherbourg had been heard as far as the Isle of Wight. He was pleased to add " Il fait bon de les entendre comme cela, et j'espère ce sera bien longtemps avant qu'on les entendra autrement. " The expenses of the journey to Cherbourg, as I am credibly informed including the presents made by the King, amount to no more than twelve thousand pounds sterling. Another journey to Brest is spoken of for next year but without any certainty.

36. Hailes to Carmarthen, 27 July 1786.

The objects recommended to my attention by your Lordship's letter by Lauzun, and particularly that of the accession of Spain to the Treaty of Alliance between this Court and Holland, have for some time past been the occasion of much enquiry amongst the Ministers of the different Courts residing here. The opinions of those whom I have found disposed to converse upon the subject have always been consonant to that which I had formed myself, which is that the Court of Madrid, seeing that France makes so great a point of their joining in the Alliance, is determined to take advantage of the eagerness of the French Minister, and to obtain some sort of advantage for their complaisance. Of what nature this advantage is (supposing the conjecture well founded) we are yet to learn, but your Lordship may rest assured that I shall use my best endeavours to find it out, or whatever may be the real cause of this impediment to the gratification of the wishes of the French Ministry.

M. de Vergennes has certainly declared that Spain was the only power in Europe for whom an accession to the Treaty could be suitable, and the well-grounded policy of avoiding everything

that might wear the appearance of a league has no doubt made him meet the overtures of the King of Sweden with so little cordiality. Notwithstanding the steady attachment of the King of Sweden to the French, and all the little arts to which he has condescended in order to captivate the public opinion whilst he was in this country, he certainly left it without having made any impression in his favour, and it seems reasonable to conclude that his late declaration at the Hague, by His Minister, of his never having desired to acceed to the Treaty of Alliance, after all the fruitless steps which he had taken for that purpose, has not tended to raise his reputation here either for prudence or fair-dealing. His failure in his undertakings at the late Diet has been spoken of too, as owing to little foresight and judgement, and as ill an opinion is entertained of his domestic as of his foreign Politics. With respect to his ambassador, the Baron de Stael, it is agreed by every one that he is a person of a very mean capacity ; and, as it cannot be expected that the affairs of Sweden will be much advanced by him, I am inclined to think that no great confidence is reposed in him.

What I had the honour of observing to your Lordship in my last respecting the East India Company is verified by the event, and no loan or augmentation of stock is likely to take place this year.

The King has received the Parliament of Bordeaux, and has ordered that body to lay its registers before the Committee appointed for their examination. To-day they will have a second audience, when His Majesty's pleasure will be farther made known.

The Marechal de Castries, at the instance of M. de Vergennes, has at last consented to the giving an account of the deductions made from the value of the ships agreed to be restored to the English owners. The papers stating those deductions have been delivered by me to M. Perregaux, in order to their being forwarded to the several claimants.

37. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN
3 August 1786.

. . . . . The affair of the Parliament of Bordeaux, which has for some time past engrossed the attention of the public, was concluded

on Saturday last to the entire satisfaction of that magistracy. The King entered himself in the most particular manner into the investigation of the business, and after having reprimanded the Parliament for their want of respect in their language and proceedings told them that, although he allowed the Sovereign Courts of his kingdom to represent their grievances to him, he would never suffer them to interfere with his authority, or to annihilate laws which he thought fit to establish for the happiness of his people. He then ordered the letters patent to be read. They annul the Arrêt of the Parliament of Bordeaux of the 19th of May, which had been published in opposition to his first letters patent. But they also fully declare that the rights of proprietors of the banks of rivers were fully secured to them, and that it had never been His Majesty's intention, in any shape, to invade them. With respect to some other points of much less importance than upon the Registers of Parliament, the King, attributing to himself the sole cognizance of them, laid his positive commands on that Body not to interfere. Thus, by a just and reasonable concession on the part of the Court, an affair is terminated, which, had it been persisted in, might have raised a ferment in the Kingdom, which, in all probability, it would not have been easy to compose. It is farther observable, with regard to this event, that, notwithstanding it has been formally declared in some of the Foreign public papers that the Duke of Polignac was not at all interested in the grants of the lands against which the opposition of the Parliament had so naturally been directed, there is the greatest reason to believe that it was solicited by him and his friends. It seems equally probable too that, notwithstanding the good grace with which the Court has yielded on this occasion, there still remains the painful impression of a failure in a measure precipitately undertaken, and in which the will of the sovereign has been successfully opposed.

I continue to use my best endeavours, according to your Lordship's instructions, to learn whether anything has been done towards the accession of Spain to the Treaty of Alliance between France and Holland, but I find all those who are likely to be informed unanimous in their opinion that M. de Vergennes and

M. D'Aranda [1] do not advance in their negotiation of that business. I can with more confidence assure your Lordship that, whatever may be the difficulties into which the King of Sweden has precipitated himself, he will meet with no assistance from this quarter, for I know that the Minister was heard to declare the other day that France had been already too much the dupe of her former ally.

I conceive that M. de Simolin [2] has received very pressing instructions from his Court to obtain every possible degree of information respecting the progress of the Commercial Treaty now in negotiation here between France and England, for he appears uncommonly inquisitive and solicitous about it.

Letters have been received here recently from India overland bringing an account of the English Company, amounting to twenty thousand Sepoys and three thousand Europeans, having marched into and taken the province of Oude.

38. Hailes to Carmarthen, 10 August 1786.

The account of the atrocious attempt [3] made on the person of our most excellent sovereign arrived at Paris on Sunday last in a letter from the Chevalier del Campo to the Spanish ambassador. Your Lordship's dispatch acquainting me with that shocking event I received early on the following day, and I want expressions to convey to you the horror which the account inspired me with. It is equally impossible for me to describe the joy I felt at your Lordship's assurance that, by the blessing of God, His Majesty had not received the least injury. It is an increase of satisfaction to be able to assure your Lordship of the concern shewn at this event by all ranks of people in this metropolis, and of the unfeigned pleasure which manifested itself when it was known that his Majesty had not been hurt.

[1] Don Pedro Pablo Abaraca of Boleo, Count of Aranda, (1718-1799) was Spanish Ambassador at Paris.

[2] Ambassador of Russia at Paris.

[3] On August 2, 1786, an attempt was made to stab George III at the gate of St. James's by a mad woman named Margaret Nicholson.

39. Hailes to Carmarthen, 10 August 1786

The body of East India correspondence, which your Lordship has done me the honour to communicate to me, and which accompanied your last dispatch, I have received and perused with the greatest attention. I shall follow your directions on every point recommended in your letter, and I have already cautioned Mr. Eden as to the touching upon the East India commercial arrangements with the French Ministry, till he has read the papers your Lordship has been pleased to send me. As I have occasionally the means of conversing with M. Berard of the French East India Company, I do not neglect to draw from him whatever information I can, with respect to its affairs. I had yesterday an opportunity of speaking to him upon the subject of them, and, as I affected to be entirely uninformed of any particulars of the late transaction in the Ganges, I asked him how that affair happened. He told me very openly that M. Dangereux, the French Agent in Bengal, had (as our Governor and Council there have concluded) dispatched the two vessels, the Auguste Victor and the Esperance, up the river for the sole purpose of trying the question of right to pass the forts unsearched, and of bringing it to issue. The French, in general, as I learn from the same authority, are by no means satisfied with their Agent, and it is well known here that he is a man of the most violent disposition, and very likely to occasion much misunderstanding between the two Countries.

I believe there is no Minister in the Cabinet that looks with so jealous an eye on our superiority in India as the Marechal de Castries, who I think would go farther to raise the French interest from the state of subjection in which it languishes at present. I judge of this disposition in him in some measure from short and unconnected conversations I have had with his son the Duc de Castries.[1] But there wants no public proofs of the Marechal's vigilance and attention to every thing that concerns that part of

[1] Armand Charles Augustin Duc de Castries (1756-1842). Fought a duel with Charles de Lameth.

the world. It is from this idea that I am led to suspect that M. Dangereux, whatever may be his natural temper, would never have ventured to go the lengths he has done, if he was not backed by some extraordinary Ministerial instructions and support from Europe, and it appears not improbable that they may be afforded by the Minister of Marine.

There is a person at this time in Paris from whose abilities and particular knowledge of our affairs in India I cannot but entertain some apprehension. This person is Mr. Boltz, formerly in the service of the Emperor, and entrusted with the direction of his East India Company, so long as it lasted. Mr. Boltz, during the late war, had two ships taken from him on their return from India by the French, and altho' the Courts of Law have decided that their value shall be restored to him, the Minister of Marine has hitherto withheld the payment, and has only granted to Mr. Boltz a sauf conduit to protect him from his creditors, who, I am told, are chiefly English, and who were concerned in the cargoes of his ships to nearly two thirds of their value. Whether this delay of justice proceeds from the Minister or the Merchant, or from the collusion of both, I know not, but it appears that the English creditors are likely to be great sufferers by it. Mr. Boltz, in the mean time, I am assured, enjoys the confidence of the Marechal de Castries, and, as there is reason to think that his long residence in India may make him a useful counsellor to the French Minister, I cannot help expressing my wishes that some means might be found that could detach him from the interest of this country.

There has existed for several years a discussion between France and Spain relative to the frontier of the two Kingdoms, at the foot of that part of the Pyrenees called the Pays de Basques. But it was not until very lately that the line could be agreed upon and settled definitely by the Commissioners which had been appointed by the respective Courts for that purpose. A district held by France for upwards of four centuries, near twelve leagues in length, and tho' naturally unproductive rendered by the industry of its inhabitants uncommonly fertile, is ceded to the Spanish Monarchy by this demarcation. It is farther remarkable that there is now on

this territory a quantity of wood capable of supplying the whole navy of France, and the inhabitants of it have at all times shewn themselves uncommonly attached to the French Government. Those who are acquainted with this circumstance are at a loss to guess what could induce the Minister to suffer such a dismemberment, as hitherto the Spanish Government has never made any demands that bear any proportion to a sacrifice of so much consequence. I have learnt from a gentleman of the country, who has lately remonstrated with the Minister on this subject, that the Marquis d'Ornano (a Corsican), the Commissary employed on the part of France, is suspected of having been bribed by the Spanish negotiator. Perhaps, but what I offer is merely surmise, this extraordinary facility on the part of the French government may be owing to their wish to forward as much as possible the accession of Spain to the Treaty of Alliance ; and the more so as it appears that the Dutch continue firm in their resolution not to allow the Spaniards the passage of the Cape to the Indian seas.

40. Hailes to Carmarthen, 16 August 1786.

I have the honour to inclose to your Lordship a letter which I received some days since from M. de Vergennes in answer to one which I wrote to that Minister, acquainting him with the last atrocious attempt on His Majesty's sacred person, and enclosing the Gazette extraordinary published on that occasion. The Court of Naples has deputed a confidential person, of the name of Brissac, a native of France or of French parents, to their Court, in order to endeavour to forward the reconciliation which France has undertaken to mediate between their Most Catholic and Sicilian Majesties, but I do not find that any progress has hitherto been made towards the attainment of that much desired object. The negotiation between France and Spain for the accession of the latter to the Treaty of Alliance still continues, according to the best information that I can obtain, in the same state as when I had last the honour to write to your Lordship on the subject.

By a gentleman very lately arrived in a Corvette at L'Orient from

Pondicherry I learn that there is but one regiment at that place, and that there was no expectation of any increase of military force there.

41. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN.
24 August 1786.

..... There is lately arrived in Paris a person of the name of Culan (the Marquis de Culan, if I am rightly informed) who has resided eleven years in different parts of India, and who is presumed to possess more knowledge of that part of the world than anyone employed under the French government. The language held by this gentleman on board the ship on which he returned to Europe, and in which there were several English passengers, was full of affected contempt of the British military force and discipline in India. But I learn from good authority that, at his interview with the Ministers at Versailles, the opinions he gave were of a totally opposite nature, and that he declared himself fully convinced that it was impossible for France to make, openly, any attack upon the firm and consolidated power of Great Britain in India. But it appears highly important that your Lordship should be informed that this same person has given it also as his opinion that the British Empire in Asia is by no means invulnerable on another side, and that by a confederacy of the Country Powers a successful invasion of Bengal might be effected.

The last ship that arrived at L'Orient sailed from Pondicherry in March. It brings the account of Tippoo Saib's[1] being alive, and of some commercial regulations which he had declared his resolution of adopting for the benefit of his own country. Amongst others the Trade of Pepper was to be subjected to new restrictions.

No probable conjectures seem to have been formed here about the real design of His Imperial Majesty with respect to the Turks. I must not omit, however, to acquaint your Lordship with a circumstance that may serve to throw some additional light upon the better information you have no doubt received upon the subject of

[1] He did not die till 1799.

the Emperor's motions. The Baron de Thugut [1] (of whom I have before made mention to your Lordship as being intimately connected with the Imperial Embassy at this Court) has lately made a journey to Douay, where M. de Tott, [2] who was so long at Constantinople, at present resides. The Baron de Thugut remained, during his stay at that place, which was several weeks, at M. de Tott's house. From some particular circumstance I happen to know that no cordiality subsisted between these gentlemen before this visit, and I am therefore induced to believe that it was entirely of a political nature, and that, in all probability the Baron had been instructed by his Court to endeavour to obtain some information from or to concert some plan with M. de Tott concerning Turkey. Two or three French officers are lately arrived from Turkey, whither they had been sent to endeavour to inculcate some ideas of military discipline into the Ottoman army, but I understand that their pains have been entirely thrown away, and that they are probably the last that will ever be sent upon that kind of service.

There appears at present no disposition whatever to economy in the finances of this kingdom, and I understand that it will be necessary for the Comptroller General to have recourse to another loan this year. Purchases of great value continue to be made and works of immense expense to be carried on in different Royal establishments. M. de Calonne by his unbounded liberality and complaisance to people of high rank and distinction, supports himself still in his most important situation, but the easing the burdens of the people and the interest of the Nation seem to be as perfectly disregarded as they ever were by the most corrupt of his predecessors. It is difficult to reconcile the idea of extreme profusion with that of the most pinching necessity at the same moment. But it is an undeniable fact that, at the same time this Minister is incurring with so little appearance of concern such immense expenses in public works, in pensions, and in donations of all kinds, he has been brought to consent to discharge the long-acknowledged claim of a British subject on the French Government amounting to no more

[1] 1734-1818.

[2] 1733-1793.

than £ 12,000 sterling, only on condition that it should be paid in instalments in ten years. It is on this state of the Finances of France much more, I believe, than on the pacific professions of the Court that any hope can be grounded for the duration of the tranquillity of the two Countries.

42. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
31 August 1786.

As I presume your Lordship will be anxious to learn the effect that the death of the King of Prussia [1] may have had upon the conduct of the Court of Versailles, I take the earliest occasion of informing you that that event which has been expected here for several months, has by no means altered the general appearance of tranquillity. On the contrary, the Maréchal de Ségur has very lately made considerable reductions in many regiments, and has put those, which remained till now on the war, upon the peace establishment. Your Lordship will, doubtless, be surprised to learn that this Court did not receive intelligence of the demise of his Prussian Majesty before the 27th inst, and that by private letters only, M. d'Esterno, the Kings Minister at Berlin, having dispatched no messenger. His Majesty expressed his wonder at the circumstance to M. de Vergennes, on Sunday last. The conduct of M. d'Esterno was defended by the Minister, (M. de Vergennes, relation) and I have been assured by a person who was present (otherwise I should not credit it) that he told the King that it was not usual to dispatch a messenger on such an occasion.

The negotiation for the accession of Spain to the French and Dutch Alliance seems to lie dormant for the present. The chief objections are made by the Dutch East India Company to the navigation and commerce of the Spaniards in the Indian seas, and their freedom of the Cape.

M. de St. Foy, whose journeys to England are become very frequent, are certainly not without some views for the service of this Government. But as your Lordship is fully apprised of the character of that person, I need only add that he continues to

[1] He had died on August 17.

enjoy a very considerable share of the confidence of M. de Vergennes and M. de Rayneval. In making mention of people of this description I may, once for all, observe, that there is scarcely a Frenchman of any note who travels in England that does not endeavour, on his return, to ingratiate himself with the Minister by some account of the state of our country. It may, however, very well happen, and I am inclined to think it does, that so great a variety of accounts and opinions as is given of our affairs to the French government may tend rather to defeat than promote its purpose, by the embarassment it must necessarily occasion to the Minister in his selection and dependence upon them. M. de Vergennes himself, notwithstanding his high reputation, has contributed to my confirmation in this idea, for, in the course of conversation upon indifferent subjects, I have found him sometimes grossly mistaken and some times totally ignorant of the constitution and affairs of our Nation.

I must beg leave to recommend to your Lordship the most particular circumspection with respect to M. de Barthélemy, as I have very good grounds for believing that, very frequently, unfavourable impressions are made here of the conduct of His Majesty's Ministers thro' his dispatches, and particularly with respect to a late event...

43. Hailes to Carmarthen, 7 September 1786.

Since I had last the honour of writing to your Lordship there has happened no public event that could in any respect alter the present pacific appearance of the politics of this country. The King of Prussia's death, having been long expected, has made little or no impression, and the attention of the Minister appears rather to be fixed on the motions of the two Imperial Courts. It seems to be a notion generally entertained by the public that the projects of those closely united powers will manifest themselves in the spring of the ensuing year, and that nothing less than the invasion of the Turkish Empire is intended.

About ten days ago there arrived at L'Orient a person

(M. Parnis), who had been dispatched by M. de Souillac from Mauritius with the reference to the French government in Europe of those articles which had not been agreed upon between the French Governor General and Colonel Cathcart. I am rather inclined to hope, from what I have been able to collect, that the Ministers here are well satisfied with the conciliatory manner in which the Presidency of Bengal conducted itself on the late event in the Ganges, and that the articles which yet remain to be adjusted will meet with a liberal discussion.

The more I converse with those who speak the language of the French government, the more I am led to believe that its views in general are much less directed to a participation of our power in India than to the entire subversion of it, without any other advantage to France than that which they expect to derive from the same levelling principle which induced them to take part against us with America. The apprehension that the great influx of wealth, arising from our trade and possessions in the East, may tend to increase our strength in Europe by the reduction and even extinction of our National Debt, is always uppermost and always alarming. The Empire of India, being the Empire of luxuries, to which, according to the present system of things, they, with other nations (if I may be allowed the expression) are obliged to do homage, it cannot be reasonably doubted but that they would readily dispense with the enjoyment of what they, do not in fact, require, provided we could be completely dispossessed of our sovereignty. In submitting this reflection to your Lordship, I must beg leave to add that it is fully my opinion that, whenever this Country shall think fit to recommence hostilities (an event which I trust is yet far removed) that then, as formerly, the liberties and rights of mankind will be held out as the pretext, and the native powers of India will be made use of rather as instruments of National jealousy than ambition.

There has lately been some difference between the Minister of the Marine and M. de Calonne concerning the claims of the creditors of Mr. Boltz, whose ships under Imperial colours, were taken (as I have already had the honour to mention to your

Lordship) in India. The Maréchal de Castries by granting the usual shares of those prizes to the officers of the ships by whom they were captured, has been led into much embarrassment. The restitution of the value of those prizes having been awarded by the Courts of justice, it has been found necessary to call upon the officers (the captors) to refund their shares of the prize money, but, as it appears that the greater part has been dissipated, the Maréchal is looked to to supply the deficiency. No vouchers to prove that the rest of the cargoes were applied to the service of M. de Suffrein's fleet having been produced by the Maréchal de Castries, M. de Calonne refuses to pay the orders of that Minister, so that Mr. Boltz creditors are referred backwards and forwards from one treasury to another, without any prospect of satisfaction from either. The too good understanding between the head of the Marine department and that of Finance is always to be considered as dangerous for us. I have therefore some satisfaction in relating this circumstance to your Lordship.

M. Albert de Rioms is expected to return to Brest with his squadron about the 15th of this month.

44. Hailes to Carmarthen.
14 September 1786.

I have forborn to make any mention of the different accounts that we receive here from Holland, being in the perfect persuasion that your Lordship is more early and circumstantially informed of everything that passes in that Country. The conduct and interests of this Court with respect to the Dutch are too well known and understood to need any comment. But, altho we cannot but suppose that the republicans are pushed as much as possible by the French to the annihilation of the present Stadtholder's authority, yet observing, as we must, their present disposition to peace, we may also conclude that it is not without great anxiety that they see things carried to such an extremity as may sooner or later induce the interference of foreign powers.

It was yesterday very confidently said that M. de Maillebois was arrived at Paris from Holland, and various interpretations are put

upon his return at so critical a period. About two months before the death of the late King of Prussia, overtures were certainly made by His present Majesty thro' a private emissary sent from Berlin to Paris, for the purpose of obtaining a sum of money for his immediate exigences, and hopes were given that a hundred millions of livres would be ready to be lent to the French government immediately after the decease of the late monarch. Six hundred thousand livres were offered to the Prince, and a considerable sum to Prince Henry, provided this loan was agreed upon. The King died before anything was concluded. I mention this circumstance, the authenticity of which I have no doubt, to shew that the French are driven to the necessity of raising money anywhere, and almost upon any terms.

Some opposition was lately made by the Parliament of Paris to the registration of the loan of thirty millions made by the City ; and it arose from the general disapprobation of that body of the measures of the Comptroller General. For although that loan is apparently intended for the public works now carrying on in Paris, the King has taken the whole sum into his hands, and the City is to be supplied by him with the money required for those works, in proportion as they advance. In fact, it is another loan of the Minister, and it is well worthy of remark that in this year of profound tranquillity the sums that have been borrowed both publicly and privately amount to near two hundred millions. I have taken the liberty of touching frequently upon these extraordinary operations of finance, as they appear to me to be very hasty strides towards a national bankruptcy.

The Assembly of the Clergy broke up on Sunday last, when His Majesty, in answer to a speech made to him, as is the custom, by the Archbishop of Aix, expressed himself extremely satisfied with the whole conduct of the Ecclesiastical Body. The "portions congrues" a provision for the indigent clergy, somewhat in the nature of our Queen Anne's bounty, are augmented from five hundred to seven hundred livres.

I have been told that M. de la Fayette is solliciting to succeed M. de Souillac in India. The activity and ambition of that officer

make the circumstance not improbable. Should he succeed, I must confess I should entertain apprehensions for the duration of the good understanding between the two nations.

45. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
28 September 1786.

The Edict which I have the honour to inclose to your Lordship will clearly prove to you how far it has been from the intention of the French Minister to comply unconditionally with the wish you expressed that all debts contracted in England might be made recoverable in France. It appears now, on the contrary, both from the letter and spirit of this law, that every kind of protection is intended to be given to foreign debtors, and I make no doubt but that it has been promulgated with a view to encourage the unsuccessful manufacturers of England to take refuge in France in preference to any other country.

By an Arrêt de Conseil bearing date the 21st of this month, the Stock of the East India Company is doubled, and it now amounts to 40 millions of livres. The duration of their privilege is also extended from 7 to 15 years of peace. A knowledge of the sentiments of our Board of Control respecting the commercial intercourse of the two Companies has been much wished for here and M. Berard mentioned the subject to me some days ago. I ventured to assure him that I was very well convinced, from what I had heard from England, that there existed no jealousy on our part, but that every degree of encouragement and facility that was consistant with the general interests of the English Company, would readily be given to them. M. Berard seemed inclined to believe this to be the case, and he said he knew that our Governor General was in those favourable sentiments, but he thought the Council of a different opinion. As there appears to be very little matter of importance at present between the two countries, I propose to do myself the honour of submitting to your Lordship some general observations upon the present state of this Kingdom, without interrupting, however, the communication of such intelligence as may be necessary for your information...

46. Hailes to Carmarthen.
5 October 1786.

I have received your Lordship's dispatch, and am so fully convinced of the wisdom, good policy and reasonable grounds of suspicion that it contains, with respect to the concessions made by France in the now-concluded Commercial Treaty, that I shall redouble my efforts to find out what has been the secret spring of her conduct in this business. As I am not acquainted with the Articles of the Treaty, I must beg your Lordship will have the goodness to furnish me with a copy of them as soon as convenient, as a thorough knowledge of them may guide me to the discovery of such private motives as may have occasioned many of the demands and concessions now subscribed to. There is reason to suspect that in this, as well as in every other public transaction at this Court, intrigue has a considerable share of influence. Being at present employed in digesting some account of the state of this Country, which contrary to my original intention, but to avoid interruption, I propose shortly to submit to your Lordship in one letter, I shall postpone any further mention of the commercial treaty and its probable political effects till I come to speak upon that particular point in my relation, and when, in all likelihood, I shall have heard something more of the opinions of the French themselves concerning it.

I have the honour to inclose to your Lordship a copy of a letter written by me to M. de Vergennes on the subject of the treatment of a servant belonging to me and wearing the dress of a Chasseur in Common with some of those belonging to Foreign Ministers, and a great many of the Kings subjects, in this capital. I have also the honour to enclose the Minister's answer to my complaint, together with the Ordonnance therein mentioned, but which I do not find to be carried into execution, except in the instance which concerns myself. Your Lordship will be pleased to observe that I have not in my letter entered at all into the question of right in Foreign Ministers to give their servants what dress they please, having contented myself with marking a strong distinction in the instance

of myself, between their compliance with the King's pleasure and the obedience of His Majesty's subjects to his orders. Before I sent my letter to M. de Vergennes, I communicated it to several of the members of the Corps Diplomatique and they declared their approbation of it to me in the strongest terms, seeing, as they added, no reason why they should conform to an ordonnance which the King's own subjects were not made to obey. I beg your Lordship will be pleased to send me your instructions how I am to proceed in this affair.

Madame de Vergennes is at this time, dangerously ill, and there are people, not unacquainted with the domestic situation of the Minister, who think it possible that her death, should it happen, may occasion his retreat from public affairs.

47. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN.
12 October 1786.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's letter by Lauzun, and to assure you that I am made extremely happy by the approbation which you are pleased to express of my conduct. I shall hope to deserve the continuance of it by the utmost zeal and vigilance.

The Court being removed to Fontainebleau, I expect shortly to have more frequent opportunities of conversing with those who are likely to be informed of the object recommended at the end of your Lordship's letter. As yet I have not heard of any circumstance that indicates an alteration in the system of the affairs of Prussia, or any more favorable disposition than heretofore subsisted in the Court of Berlin towards that of Versailles.

The success of the Porte in the recovery of Egypt out of the hands of the Beys, who have so long tyrannized over it, might have been considered as favourable to the interest of Great Britain, had not the French plan of carrying on a trade with the East Indies thro' that Country and by Suez been chimerical in the highest degree, for I find it now to be a fact that, at the particular requisition of the Maréchal de Castries, a Treaty was concluded between the French and five of those Beys. By the possession

which the Porte has retaken of that Country, all those prospects, of advantage illusory as they were, are entirely vanished.

I am told that the French are at this time building a fort on the Gold Coast somewhere between Cape Coast and a place called Animabon. I am also assured that they have there a line-of-battle ship to protect the work. Altho' I can have little doubt but that a circumstance of such a nature must have reached your Lordship's ears by the means of some of our African traders, if it be really true, yet, lest, by any accident, it should not have been made known to you, I have thought it adviseable to send you this account, the authenticity of which is strongly vouched for...

48. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
18 October 1786.

The overtures made by the Court of Berlin to that of Versailles to enter into a mediation for the settlement of the troubles in Holland, having been accompanied by an unconditional invitation to concur in restoring the command of the Hague to the Stadtholder, they were received and answered with extreme coldness. But I find that a proposal made by the French Minister to lend his assistance in bringing about that event, provided the Stadtholder will consent to resign his right to the nomination of the Magistracy, has been received in such a manner in Berlin, that M.de Vergennes, who has lately had a courier from thence, has expressed a great degree of satisfaction at it, as well as at the conduct of M. de Goertz. This information, which appears to me to be of great importance in the present state of affairs in Holland, I have just obtained, and am happy to have so early an opportunity of transmitting it to your Lordship as by this day's messenger,

I have nothing else of a pressing nature to communicate at this moment, except that M. de Brantzen set out for Holland a few days ago, pretexting his private affairs.

49. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
Fontainebleau 25 October 1786.

A residence of between two and three years in this Kingdom, where I have not been inattentive to the course of public events, has

considerably lessened the diffidence I felt at the beginning of submitting to your Lordship such accounts as I received from others unconfirmed by my own observation. Being more emboldened now, I have to entreat your indulgence for the freedom which I shall venture to use in the delivery of my sentiments upon those matters which may appear to require your Lordship's full information.

According to M. Necker's[1] calculation, the public debts of England and France, by great singularity of accident, at the end of the war, amounted to nearly the same sum. France had been, taking all circumstances together, full as great a sufferer as Great Britain by the war, and she had nothing to console herself with but the unproductive gratification of seeing America politically separated from her parent country, without any increase of commercial advantage to herself; and that for reasons evidently existing in her inability to furnish those articles of first necessity of which America stands in need, either so good, so cheap, or at so long credit as England. Disappointed then in those hopes (if she really had entertained any) of securing the trade of the United States to herself, it might have been expected that she would have turned her eyes inward upon her own domestic condition, and, after having seen the mischief she had brought upon herself in common with her enemy, that she would have taken some effectual steps towards the contracting her expenditure, and have applied to her wounds the only medicament from which she could expect relief, that of economy. Great Britain, by setting that example, made such a conduct doubly necessary; each country being accustomed, and with reason, to measure its own wants and distress by the advantages and resources of its rival. But France, at the present moment, seems to have lost entirely sight of that policy; and your Lordship will have observed that I have particularly dwelt, in the course of my correspondence, upon those operations of finance which I have thought most likely to throw light upon a conduct so opposite to what might have been expected.

Although I have always been in the perfect persuasion that the

[1] 1732-1804.

systems of reform proposed, and begun indeed, in this reign, by Mons. Turgot [1] and Mons. Necker are as impraticable as they are inapplicable to the government of this Monarchy, and, altho' it be evidently necessary that that powerful class which stands between the throne and the people should be supported by a part of the revenues of the country, yet (if I may be allowed the expression) the wise management of venality, and the economy of corruption and favour, by not heaping, as is the case in the present day, too many honours and emoluments on the same persons, offer such great resources as to constitute, perhaps, the only essential and practicable superiority of a good over a bad administration of the finances. It is to the Court, my Lord, that you must look for the source of the present evil. The Queen, not only during the latter years of the reign of the late King, but even till after the birth of the Dauphin, by which event the succession seemed in some measure secured, was very far from enjoying that degree of power and influence which she is possessed of at present. But that event decided all the courtiers, and they hastened with precipitation to the standard of favor ; whilst those who before had constituted Her Majesty's intimate and circumscribed society, were soon consolidated into a formidable party in the State. The strong propensity of this Princess to every kind of pleasure and expence has been improved into great advantage by all those who have considered only their own elevation and advancement. Her pretended friends, by administering to her pleasures, are become the intimate participators of her secrets, and, having once got possession of them, they may, in fact, be said to be masters of their own mistress, and to have secured by that means to themselves the permanence of that power, which otherwise the changeableness of her disposition rendered extremely precarious.

Although a spirit of intrigue may be said to be woven into the characters of almost all Frenchmen, and particularly of those brought up in a Court, the Duke and Duchess of Polignac can neither of them be supposed, from the narrowness of their capacities, to have laid, of themselves, any concerted plan whatever

[1] 1727-1781.

for the purpose of securing to themselves the duration of that favor which accidentally shone upon them. M. de Vaudreuil [1] and M. d'Adhemar, both consummately ambitious and intriguing, and both attached, at first, fro mmotives of gallantry, to the Duchess, are those who have had the chief direction of her conduct. All their own little talents of society were successfully employed in a Court where pleasure was the principal concern. But in order that the source from which the streams of liberality were to flow might be well supplied, it was become an essential object with the party to have a Comptroller General at their disposal. M. de Calonne, formerly Intendant of Metz and afterwards of Lille, a man of wit and parts and infinite pliability, was fixed upon by M. de Vaudreuil for the place.

M.de Vaudreuil has been justified in his choice, for no one was ever truer to the trust reposed in him than the present Minister of Finance ; I mean to that of supplying with unbounded profusion everyone that could in any shape be considered to be of his party. No man was ever more systematical in his corruption. No minister was ever more studious to increase the jealousy of the Court with respect to the privileges of the Parliaments. The voice of the people is now and then, indeed, faintly heard indeed in their remonstrances, but as the avenues to the throne are all secured by the profusion of the Minister to all who are in credit and power, it has little or no effect and dies away for want of being seconded. I know it has been said that the extent of the influence of the Queen's party goes no farther than to the disposal of certain places and pensions without interfering with the great line of public business, and particularly that of foreign affairs, but it ought surely to be observed, that, when any set of them can command the person who holds the purse of the State, they must necessarily have the greatest direct influence in all internal, and a considerable indirect share in all Foreign Affairs.

Your Lordship might expect with reason some particular proofs in support of these general assertions of the prodigality of the Department of Finance, were I not to repeat, what I have already had

[1] Louis Philippe de Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil, 1724—1802.

the honour of observing to you, and which is that at the moment that this Country is in the profoundest state of tranquillity that it can at any period expect to enjoy, it is obliged every year to have recourse to new loans. I know that the pretext for borrowing is the paying off the debt contracted during the war, but Government borrows this year near two hundred millions of livres, and the amount of the reimboursement is no more than seventy five, and that too when the Sovereign is in possession of an annual income of upwards of six hundred millions.

With respect to the loan of thirty millions, to which the City of Paris was lately induced to set its name, the distress of the Government may be measured by the grossness of the artifice it employed to get possession of so small a sum. The money was said to be raised for the purpose of the buildings and improvements of Paris but it was no sooner raised than it was paid into the Royal Treasury, the Government, out of its pretented ease having promised to issue annually for those public purposes the sum of three or four millions, as the works proceeded. This plain question might have been asked, what occasion can the City have to raise more at any one time than three or four millions, according as the expenses are incurred, and why should it burden itself with so large a sum as thirty millions, raised all at once, which it cannot employ all at once.

But, as if the derangement of the Finances were not yet great enough, and as if Cherbourg were not sufficient to swallow up all the unemployed treasure of France, immense works are carrying on, or intend to be carried on in all the Royal Houses. The additions to St. Cloud are estimated at eleven millions ; fifteen hundred workmen have been employed for some months past at Fontainebleau. Compiègne, Rambouillet, and other places have been improved in the greatest style of magnificence, and it is said the Versailles is very shortly to undergo a thorough repair, the expence of which can hardly be calculated. I will not trouble your Lordship with the detail of the establishments of His Majesty's brothers, which are equal, perhaps, to those of some of the most independent Princes in Europe. The inconsiderate people of the Capital are, however,

constantly boasting the immense resources of the Kingdom, without reflecting that those resources are found in the most wretched and oppressed class in mankind. If it be a wise maxim that every Government should endeavour to preserve its customs and manners as distinct as possible from those of its neighbours, and keep alive those patriotic prejudices which are the source of persevering courage in war, and a steady attachment to internal produce and manufactures in time of peace, none has so much to reproach itself with for an opposite conduct as that of France, the strong characteristic features that formerly marked the subjects of this monarchy are so much altered, that the French appear to be a different people to what they were before the beginning of the late war. Different circumstances have concurred to produce this effect, and men of a speculative turn of mind do not fail to discern in it, tho' at a distance, the most important revolutions. The intercourse of the French with the Americans whose manners and opinions could not but have influence, have brought them nearer to the English than they had ever been before. The almost unrestrained introduction of our daily publications (tolerated indeed by the Government from the conviction of the impossibility of preventing it) having attracted the attention of the people more towards the freedom and advantages of our constitution, has also infused into them a spirit of discussion of public matters which did not exist before. But amongst the most disadvantageous effects of this intercourse, may certainly be reckoned an almost universal taste for the elegancies and luxuries of British manufacture, a taste, which, since the war, has turned the scale of trade entirely against this nation.

Whatever may be the views of France with respect to other nations in acceding so readily to the commercial propositions made by England, they must be such as will take time to discover. In the mean while by considering the nature of the French Government, and the present state of its finances, trade and manufactures, I am much inclined to think that it will appear probable to your Lordship, that motives more domestic and more immediately pressing have had their weight. When your Lordship did me the honor to instruct me about this time twelvemonth to see M. de Vergennes

upon the subject of the Commercial Treaty, and to assure him that it was sincerely the wish of England to bring that business to a conclusion, upon the footing of a reciprocal advantage, I informed you of the temper in which I found him, and of the very warm, I may say indeed angry, language, which he held upon that occasion. This conversation had been preceded by several Arrêts de Conseil, establishing such duties upon British manufactures, as amounted almost to an absolute prohibition. The French had, at that time certainly the fullest right to lay on those duties, but, after having done so, they could have none to express any dissatisfaction towards us, prohibition having been answered by prohibition, and, instead of reciprocal advantages, mutual disadvantages having taken place. As far therefore as the acts of the two Governments went, there could be no just ground of reproach, whatever there might be for ill-humour on the part of France, the conduct of both being the same. The ill-humour, it must be confessed, was not without cause, and it spoke loudly their inferiority in their commercial intercourse with us.

The French, before and ever since the peace, had been endeavouring to establish manufactures to rival ours, for which the most decided taste prevailed amongst them, and as much encouragement as the Government could give, it gave, but it was soon seen that although ingenuity and industrious imitation might go a long way, equal perfection and equal cheapness were not easily attainable. The Ministers of this Government cannot be so ignorant of the manner in which it is constituted not to know how difficult it is to give force to all laws, but particularly to those of a prohibitory nature, where great credit and power are interested in the infringement of them. In Great Britain, His Majesty's Ministers, with uncommon wisdom, vigilance, and perseverance, have, at last, found means to carry into effect the revenue laws, which had been so long eluded, but they had been only eluded, they had not been suspended in favor of individuals, whereas in France they are both the one and the other. The extent of the first mischief is known and can be appreciated, but that of the latter is out of all calculation. The cause is not difficult to assign. The Ministers, at least

those of the present day, are all actuated by one invariable principle, that of attachment to their places, and, whoever is a little attentive to their conduct must see that to ward off intrigues, and to conciliate and gratify the powerful are the chief means they employ for securing themselves. I will beg leave to suppose, for the sake of example, that the Visites Domiciliaires, which, before any progress had been made in the treaty, had been idly threatened to be established, had taken place. Without entering into the consideration of the long train of mischiefs attendant on that species of inquisition, it may be asked what would have been the probable consequence ? That every one having credit enough with the Great to procure an exemption would not have failed to apply for it in favor of some dependent or other. The fatal effects of such partiality are too evident to require any comment. It seems, therefore, probable, that the French Government felt its own inability to give effect to its prohibitory laws against the importation of British manufactures, and in that respect, at all events, they may be said to have been the gainers by the treaty.

But I think I can take upon me to assure your Lordship that there exists another, and no less principal cause, of the eagerness of France to conclude the commercial arrangements. I mean that of the immediate relief of the Trésor Royal by the increase of the revenue, an increase which, it may be presumed, will prove immense from the sudden influx of all sorts of British Merchandise paying the legal duties, as soon as the Treaty shall take effect. If this opinion should prove to be well grounded, and from the attention I have paid to the late conduct of the Comptroller General I am much inclined to think it is, it will be a strong mark of the corruption of that minister, who sacrifices to an immediate and temporary resource the dearest interests of his country. In defence however to the public of the concessions, which appear to have been made to Great Britain, it is said by the Ministers that France looks forward to future advantages. But that language is too speculative to satisfy people in general, and, as far as the substance of the Treaty is known, it seems to be condemned. An argument which I have met with in the world, and which I have found to be adopted by

some men of sense, whose opinions have weight, has, I think, made a considerable impression; on that account I have always endeavoured to controvert it. England, say they, has the immense advantage of supplying a Country that reckons twenty six millions of inhabitants, with her manufactures, whilst France cannot expect to supply half that immense population in her trade with us. My answer to this has been, that tho' it be true that there is that great difference between the population of the two Countrys, yet, it ought also to be observed that there is a very great difference between the conditions of the two Countries, and that there is diffused through Great Britain a degree of affluence, that does not pervade this kingdom, on which account, taking all things together, it may be presumed that there exists in England full as many people who are able to afford themselves foreign luxuries as there are in France.

Although when your Lordship did me the honor to direct me to speak to the Minister upon the subject of the Treaty, I made use of such conciliatory language as I judged most expedient for the purpose of putting him into good humor, and spoke of the projected Treaty as likely to secure the duration of the peace, yet (without entering into the consideration of great political objects) I confess I did not understand them, nor do I now, in what manner that arrangement can essentially contribute to produce such an effect. If, as your Lordship seems inclined to think, the French have shown great facility and have granted us more than we had reason to expect, may it not be asked, where is the present reciprocity, which is spoken of as the cement of union between us both? But even supposing that reciprocity to exist at this moment, it seems to be a task beyond the reach of human reason to compute how long the balance can be kept in the equal poise of mutual advantage, without inclining in favor of one or the other, that it should always remain in the same state, seems both physically and morally impossible, and whenever it shall come to weigh down in any considerable degree on one side or the other, will not the probable policy of the disavantaged Country be (if I may be allowed the expression) to cut the knot which it finds itself unable to untie?

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Your Lordship knows that the grand efforts of France of late years have been, and still continue to be, directed towards the increase and improvement of their marine establishment. The Maréchal de Castries, who is at the head of that department, is generally esteemed for his probity and independence, and there is no man in the Cabinet who wishes more the good of his country. His abilities, indeed, are not highly rated and his administration is variously spoken of. The Ordonnances which were lately digested and published by him, of which a copy was transmitted to your Lordship, are thought by many to contain regulations (particularly those which have been adopted in imitation of ours) inapplicable to the spirit of the French constitution. On the other hand the just encouragement to the French West India Colonies, by taking off the restrictions which obliged them to import many sorts of provisions of the first necessity from the ports of France, and that notwithstanding the great clamour raised against the measure by all the traders of those ports, has gained him credit both for good policy and firmness of character. The bounties established upon cargoes of Newfoundland fish in the different ports of the Mediterranean is a proof of his attention to the increase of the number of seamen. According to the best and latest account that I have been able to obtain, there are now sixty three or sixty four ships of the line which might be put in a condition for sea in a short time.

But in the same degree as the attention of this government has been exercised towards its navy, the Army of France appears to have been neglected. The Sovereign, indeed is known to have no turn to military affairs, while, on the contrary, he takes the greatest interest in those of his marine, and is said to have acquired a great share of nautical information. The Maréchal de Ségur, formerly much distinguished for his bravery, but of a capacity much inferior to the difficulties of the department at which he presides, is not likely to raise the reputation of the French Army, and people are unanimous in the accounts they give of the bad discipline and constitution of their troops. I have heard it said by more than one that, if, by any extraordinary revolution in the

present system of Europe, the Courts of Vienna and Berlin were to be united against France, she must inevitably fall a sacrifice to their superiority in every respect. There are, upon the present establishment, including the militia about two hundred thousand men, of which there are seventy regiments of cavalry, which completed, amount to thirty five thousand men, and incomplete, to about twenty two. There are twenty six inspectors of these troops, and I have heard it remarked, as a great vice in the constitution of the French army, that every one of the twenty six employs a different method in their discipline and formation, whatever is understood and practised by one body of men being absolutely unintelligible to another, all cooperation, in case of necessity, would be impossible.

It has been, no doubt, a matter of surprise to your Lordship, that a Minister, like M. de Vergennes, standing alone, and unsupported by any connexion either of birth or marriage, should have been able to hold so important a post as that of the Foreign Affairs for so long a time. But the prudence of the Minister has been seconded by many favorable circumstances and much good fortune. His prudence has been remarkable, in that he has studiously avoided every kind of interference in those affairs that have not immediately concerned his department. And though he has always been unconnected with the Queen's party, yet a courteous deference to every measure that comes recommended from it, has at least served to keep him upon tolerable terms with it. How much he has been favored by circumstances, the whole of the late war can bear witness, for, when there appeared but one spirit in the world, and that was evidently directed against the power of Great Britain, it is not to be wondered at that he should have succeeded, in some degree, in his undertakings. But the event in which his good fortune has most effectually served him, was that of the late accommodation of the dispute between the Emperor and the Dutch. Situated, as he was at that critical moment, between the danger of drawing upon himself the whole weight of the Queen's displeasure, by taking part against her brother, and that, no less, of losing Holland, which it had cost so much treasure

and pains to gain over to her interests, it ought to be seen that it was much less his policy than the character of the Emperor that brought that affair to so peaceable a settlement.

In speaking of the Minister, I should be naturally led to offer to your Lordship some observations upon the present situation of France with respect to other Countries, but the frequent occasion I have had, and which I expect in future to have of addressing you upon those topics must render them superfluous here. I shall therefore close this letter, which I fear has already been too long, with remarking that whatever ambitious views France may at this time entertain (and there can be no doubt that she has many) they must necessarily be kept under by the badness of her own internal administration.

50. Hailes to Carmarthen.
2 November 1786.

I have very little matter of consequence to trouble your Lordship with by this day's messenger. We have no news of importance from Holland, nor does it appear that any fresh steps have been taken by this Court in the affairs of the Republic since I had last the honour of writing to you on the subject of them. I have been told that an idea is entertained by the Minister of Finance of establishing a National or Royal bank; but altho' I can believe any scheme even as extravagant almost as the Mississippi, would be adopted by M. de Calonne in his distress, yet it seems scarcely credible, in the present state of Government credit, that any attempt of the kind can be made with a prospect of success. It was well understood at the time of the establishment of the Caisse d'Escompte that that institution could only grow up and acquire consistence as long as it continued out of the reach of Royal interference. With much more reason it may be presumed that no establishment can meet with success, where the property of the public would be entirely at the mercy of the Minister.

Your Lordship will have heard no doubt, some time since, of the accommodation of the differences between the Courts of Madrid and Naples, and of the latter having gained every point it contended

for. If anything could contribute to render the Court of Madrid more dissatisfied with that of Versailles than it was before, it certainly must be this mediation between the two Royal relations, a business which the French Minister is accused of having negligently plaster'd up and got rid of, rather than transacted in a satisfactory manner. The Marquis de Circello, lately ambassador at the Court of Vienna, had, on the 26th of this month, his first audience with the King, Queen and Royal family, in quality of Ambassador Extraordinary of His Majesty the King of the two Sicilies.

51. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
Fontainebleau, 9 November 1786.

I have the honor to inform your Lordship that I arrived here on Sunday last late in the evening. It was my wish and intention to reach this place in time to attend His Majesty's Levée in the forenoon of that day, but I was unfortunately prevented by the breaking of my carriage in the streets of Paris on my way hither.

I have seen M. de Vergennes, who expressed great satisfaction at the expeditious manner in which everything relative to the Commercial Treaty had been conducted, and spoke to me in high terms of the assiduity and candour of Mr Eden throughout the whole of that business. Such indeed appears to be the disposition of this Court at present, so favorable towards England are the sentiments which now prevail in the French Cabinet, that I am confident a better opportunity can never offer for establishing a perfect and permanent harmony between the two Countries ; and I am of opinion that nothing should be neglected in the present moment that may tend to strengthen and cherish those sentiments which are at the present time so manifestly conspicuous.

A Courier arrived here a few days ago from Constantinople, but the particulars he brings have not yet transpired. Nevertheless I have good reason for assuring your Lordship, that the Turks are holding a language of hostility to the Empress of Russia, which gives no small uneasiness to this Court. The present French Ambassador at the Porte, M. de Choiseul Gouffier, will not remain

on account of his health being much impaired by that climate. A Courier from Berlin arrived also within these few days, but brought nothing new.

52. Dorset to Carmarthen.
16 November 1786.

Their Majesties, the Dauphin, and the rest of the Royal Family are removed from Fontainebleau to Versailles. The Dauphin set out on Monday, the Queen on Tuesday, and the King on Wednesday. The expense attending these journeys of the Court is incredible. Your Lordship may have a faint idea of it from the number of Post Horses that have been employed these last three days. The Duke de Polignac told me that he had given orders for two thousand one hundred and fifteen horses for this service on the roads leading from Fontainebleau to Versailles and Paris, which, considering the distance to either of those places is not equal to forty English miles, is prodigious. Besides this, an adequate proportion of horses are ordered for the removal of the heavy baggage belonging to the Royal family. How M. de Calonne contrives to furnish means to answer such vast demands cannot be conceived, but he still enjoys great credit at Court. It is asserted with some degree of authority that he will be under the necessity of borrowing at least eight millions of livres next year. M. de Vergennes is somewhat recovered from his late indisposition since he left Fontainebleau. The Maréchal de Castries is by no means in a good state of health, and the Maréchal de Ségur, who is very much broke since last year, was obliged to come to Paris for advice, having found himself much oppressed by the great multiplicity of business in which he was engaged at Fontainebleau. The Duc d'Harcourt will not enter upon his attendance on the Dauphin till next spring. It is with no small reluctance that nobleman undertakes so important a charge, but he could not refuse sacrificing his private convenience to the wishes of their Majesties.

M. de Rayneval is gone to Holland for three weeks only, as it is said M. de Vergennes does not in the least doubt that the divisions in that Country will be amicably adjusted. It is with some satis-

faction I have learned that neither the Stadtholder nor the Patriotic Party (for so it is called) have conducted themselves agreeably to the wishes of the French Minister. The latter having shewn a desire of entirely getting rid of the Stadtholder, while His Highness has, in some instances, appeared to forget that he is at most only the Chief Magistrate of the Republic. From these circumstances Your Lordship may easily conceive what is the drift of M. de Rayneval's mission. M. de Brantzen is expected to return in about a fortnight.

53. Dorset to Carmarthen
23 November 1786.

It was not before last Tuesday that I obtained audiences of the King and Queen at Versailles, when I had the honor of delivering to them His Majesty's letters of notification of the death of Her Royal Highness the Princess Amelia; the Court will in consequence go into mourning on Sunday for eleven days.

An almost perfect calm in respect to news prevails at this time, at least of such matters as are in any degree worthy of credit or attention ; Yet there are at all times speculations without end, as they are also for the most part without foundation. But I am unwilling to take up your Lordship's time unnecessarily, which would certainly be the case were I to communicate to you the talk of the Coffee Houses and of the Salon, at which place most of the Persons of fashion and consequence assemble, where, however, such subjects of a public nature as are brought into discussion have generally been already animadverted upon in the public prints.

M. de Rayneval's mission to Holland has excited great curiosity, but I do not find that it has occasioned any alarm there or in this country. He is I understand to confer with the Prussian Minister at the Hague, and they are jointly to endeavour to sooth the Stadtholder, or, in failure of those means to force him into terms of present accommodation.

The interview between the Emperor and the Empress of Russia, which is supposed to be in agitation, occupies the attention of this

Court at present, and the Cabinet of Versailles would no doubt exert all its power to prevent it from taking place, as an alliance so formidable might, with the concurrence of the King of Prussia (in which case France would stand alone Protectress of the Porte) eventually prove fatal to the interests and even to the existence of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand it is said that a great coolness actually subsists between their Imperial Majesties, which, if it be so, will of course be encouraged in every possible degree by the French Ministry.

The several Ministers, whose indispositions of health I mentioned when I last had the honor of writing to your Lordship, are all much recovered, tho' M. de Vergennes mends, I think, but slowly.

The works at Cherbourg are advancing, but the late high winds did some damage to two of the cones. The Duke of Harcourt has hitherto paid unremitting attention to that undertaking, but he will no longer be able to give it his inspection after he shall have entered upon his attendance upon the Dauphin, whom he can never quit from the moment of taking charge of him.

54. Dorset to Carmarthen, 30 November 1786.

Nothing has transpired respecting the affairs of Holland since the return of M. de Brantzen. It is not certain how soon M. de Rayneval will come back, but it is said that M. [1] Deverac will shortly return.

The protestants have of late been much the subject of conversation, and people have even gone so far as to say that that body have made an offer to the King of one hundred million of livres to obtain a revival of the Edict of Nantz. It has been likewise said that the Archbishop of Toulouse has received orders not to attend the Assembly of the States of Languedoc, till further instructions shall be given him from the Court. I cannot, however, take upon me to affirm that either one or other of these reports has any foundation, but I expect in a few days to receive some certain information relative to that matter.

[1] Should be de Veyrac.

M. de Calonne finds himself very much embarassed by the enormous demands upon him for the expenses of the Court. The establishment of the Queen, exclusive of the salaries of Her Majesty's principal officers of State, with the purchase and alterations of St Cloud for the Dauphin, has amounted this year to thirty eight millions of livres. In addition to these immense demands upon the Royal Treasury, the King is going on with the works at Rambouillet, Compiégne, and Fontainebleau, and next year, or the year after a thorough repair of the Palace of Versailles will be absolutely necessary.

An experiment, which owing to the ignorance of the director of it, totally failed, of a carronade was made last Saturday by an Englishman at Versailles in presence of the Maréchal de Castries and several naval Officers. The King had in the morning seen the preparations, but did not stay to be present at the result of them. A ridiculous circumstance happened upon the occasion, owing to the boxes, which were to be supposed to contain the apparatus necessary for this experiment, being addressed to the Admiralty. Upon every one of the boxes was written "too much care cannot be taken on opening this case," on one was written "Phosphorus," on another "combustible compositions" so that at every stroke of the hammer, the Bystanders, consisting of the whole of the Board of Admiralty, hastily retired. Their apprehensions were however soon removed upon the opening of the cases, when, to their great astonishment, the contents turned to be Piano-Fortes, and several large bales of Manchester goods.

55. Dorset to Carmarthen, 7 Dec. 1786.

A short time since M. de Vergennes received the intelligence of the differences between the Court of Petersburg and the Porte having been settled. The Russian Minister expresses himself to be satisfied with the concessions, which have been made on the part of the Turks, yet it is apprehended that the same disputes will in the course of a few months break out again with as much acrimony as ever. These arrangements will however in all pro-

bability decide the Empress to make the visit she had projected to Cherson, and I understand that M. de Ségur, the French Minister at the Court of Petersburgh, is engaged to accompany Her Imperial Majesty whenever this journey shall take place.

In my last letter I had the honor of mentioning to your Lordship the different reports that were circulated respecting the Protestant subjects in France.

I have since learned that Government has taken into consideration the situation of that Body, and that a plan is now framing to give them an État Civil, of which they have been deprived ever since the repeal of the Edict of Nantz.[1] The heads of the Clergy have been consulted, and the matter is now in the hands of the Garde des Sceaux, for his opinion and plan of execution. The principal difficulty arises from the form of marriage, which the Protestants solicit to have performed by one of their own Ministers, in presence of a Civil Magistrate; whereas the Roman Clergy insist on the ceremony being performed in a church of the Country. M. de Saint Etienne, son of M. Rabout of Nismes, is the person deputed to petition in favor of the Protestants. The report of a sum of money having been offered to the King for their restoration of their former privileges is without foundation.

56. Dorset to Carmarthen, 14 Dec. 1786.

Nothing authentic has transpired lately relative to the disputes in Holland, but there seems no doubt that the power of the magistracy will prevail over that of the Stadtholder, unless the King of Prussia[2] shall come to an open declaration in favour of the latter. It may be relied on that the French Cabinet is at present wholly unacquainted with His Prussian Majesty's disposition towards this Country, and that monarch, it is believed, is still wavering between the opposite counsels of Prince Henry[3] and M. de Hertzberg.

[1] The Edict of Nantes granting liberty of worship to Protestants issued by Henry IV in 1598 was repeated by Louis XIV, October 17, 1675.

[2] Frederic William II the Stadtholder had married his sister.

[3] Brother of Frederick the Great.

The Empress of Russia will, it is said, set out on her journey to Cherson the 10th of next month. Her Imperial Majesty goes from Petersburgh to Kiow, at which place she proposes to remain about six weeks.

The complaints against the commercial Treaty have grown loud in this part of France, and it is understood that the Province of Normandy will shortly present a very strong memorial against those stipulations by which it considers itself as particularly affected.

A number of Edicts, by which new taxes are laid on and which are intended to supply the deficiences occasioned by the falling in of the Troisième Vingtième, are ready, and, it is thought, will be registered by the Parliament at the end of the year. The high winds which have prevailed for some days past, and which still continue, create much uneasiness on account of the works at Cherbourg. Should they however be proof against the present very tempestuous weather, there is reason to think that nothing hereafter will be able to affect them.

. . . . . .

I have just been informed that accounts have been received this morning from Cherbourg of very considerable damage having been done to the works at that place by the violence of the wind. I mention this to your Lordship as a report only, of the truth of which I am not certain.

57. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
21 Dec. 1786.

There are various speculations upon the affairs in Holland, but nothing authentic. M. de Vergennes seems anxious for the return of M. de Rayneval. It is asserted with some degree of confidence that M. de Veyrac's conduct has given much umbrage here, and some people have gone so far as to say that he is to be recalled. His conduct, however, must have been very exceptionable to occasion so violent a measure, supported as he is by his connection with some of the first families in this Country.

The mischief done to the works at Cherbourg has not been

considerable, but a rich West-Indiaman was driven by the violence of the wind during the late stormy weather, and pitched upon the top of one of the Cones, where she was staved and remained fixed. The crew were all saved, but the cargo is entirely lost, and the uncommon expedition with which this ship made her passage home prevented her being insured, so that the loss falls very heavy upon a few individuals, of whom Messrs Fegère and Co, of Bordeaux, are the principal sufferers most of the property on board having been shipped on their account.

A very disagreeable event for the family of Rohan happened the other day. The Archbishop of Cambray, brother of the unfortunate Cardinal, being out on a shooting party, trespassed on the property of one of his neighbours, when the gamekeeper of the proprietor went up to the Archbishop and represented to him that he had exceeded his limits, and was encroaching on his master's domain.

The Archbishop, without deigning to return any answer, fired at the man and wounded him in a very shocking manner. It is not known whether the unfortunate man is dead of his wounds, but it will certainly cost the Archbishop considerable sums of money so as to prevent it from reaching the King's ear.

The last accounts from Constantinople speak well of the Sultan's health, which is said to be in a great measure re-established.

The Empress of Russia sets out on the 13th of January, and is to be absent six months. The several Ministers, from Great Britain, France, and Vienna are to accompany Her Majesty.

58. Dorset to Carmarthen, 28 Dec. 1786.

The ultimatum from St Petersburg arrived here a few days ago, and M. de Vergennes has already returned it with some very trifling alterations, which M. de Simolin says will not meet with any objections, and seems to think the Treaty will be signed by the respective ministers of the two Courts previous to the departure of Her Imperial Majesty on Her intended tour, which remains fixed for the 13th of next month. I must, however, observe to your Lordship that since I saw M. de Simolin, I have heard from pretty

good authority that the Court of France sees with a jealous eye the Naval force of the Russians in the Black Sea, and that the alterations proposed by the Ministry here relate to that matter. If that be so the conclusion of the Treaty may not be so easily effected as M. de Simolin wishes should be believed.

It is more than probable that Mr Eden's arrival here will hasten M. de Rayneval's departure from the Hague, tho' the last letters from that place do not mention his return. M. de Vergennes, notwithstanding his health is much better since the Court left Fontainebleau, has lately been so much hurried by a great multiplicity of affairs as to be very anxious for the return of his confidential secretary.

M. d'Adhémar proposes setting out for London in about ten or twelve days. He dined at M. de Vergennes last Tuesday and looked much better than he did a month ago. He flatters himself that change of air will perfectly re-establish his health, but his friends are apprehensive that he may find himself deceived. M. de Vauguyon is expected every day from Spain, and many conjectures are formed upon his sudden return.

The Towns of Amiens and Abbéville have, in consequence of the Commercial Treaty, and some bankruptcies which have happened in Spain, discharged nearly eight thousand of their workmen, and, it is said, that these Towns have thought it necessary to petition the Minister to send them troops in order to prevent tumults.

M. Montgolfier pretends to have at last discovered means of directing the course of Balloons, and has obtained the sanction of M. de Calonne for his first experiment, which is to be made the first day of next May, when he engages to depart from a town in Auvergne, distant from Paris 150 miles, and to descend at or near this City in the space of seven hours. I should almost scruple to mention to your Lordship an undertaking so extraordinary had I not heard from exceedingly good authority that such a plan is seriously in agitation. Great credit is given to M. Montgolfier's superior skill in these matters, and that gentleman's friends are sanguine in their expectations of his success. The weight he proposes to carry exceeds that of a waggon load.

I omitted to mention to your Lordship in my dispatch of last week that[1] M. de Sombreuil, un ancien militaire, is appointed Governor of the Hospital for Invalides in the room of M. Guibert deceased.

59. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
30 Dec. 1786.

The Duke of Dorset being to-day at Versailles, I take the liberty of forwarding to your Lordship the intelligence which I have just received of His Majesty's having come to the resolution of calling together an Assemblée de Notables, for the purpose of communicating to them some important views of government, tending, as it expressed, to lighten the burdens of the people.

I am assured that two objects which have long been in contemplation, will be submitted to the discussion of this assembly, one of which is the alienation of the Crown lands, and the other is the annihilation of all internal provincial duties, none whatever to be collected except on the coasts and frontiers of the Kingdom.

The taxes which have been brought forward have been suspended in consequence of this measure, which, under whatever pretext it may be disguised, has certainly been adopted with a view to reanimate, if possible, the calamitous credit of Government, and to pave the way to fresh loans. The expedient is of so serious a nature as to leave no doubt of the distress of the Minister of Finance. Recourse has not been had to it since the year 1626.

[1] Charles Francois Vérot Marquis de Sombreuil 1727-1794. Saved from the guillotine by his daughter drinking a glass of blood.

DESPATCHES FROM PARIS

JAN.-DEC. 1787.

1787

1. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
4 Jan. 1787.

I reserved for this occasion the Liste des Notables, which I enclose together with His Majesty's circular letter to each of them, who are summoned to meet at Versailles on the 29th of this month. The Princes of the Blood have not yet been formally appointed, as it is suppos'd that they will be applied to by the King personally. Various are the speculations form'd upon this expedient of the Comptrolleur Général. It is beyond a doubt that there are great arrears of debt to be arrang'd, and plans of reform have been thought of which the Comptrolleur Général did not feel himself strong enough to attempt the execution of without the sanction of the different Parliaments, though those Bodies have hitherto generally oppos'd his schemes, taking example by the Parliament of Paris which has on all occasions shewn itself hostile to Monsr. de Calonne. The violence of animosity which had so long subsisted between that Minister and Monsr. de Breteuil is at present somewhat abated, owing to their concurrence of sentiment in advising His Majesty in regard to the present step.

Monsr. de Castries and Monsr. de Ségur were entirely ignorant of the measure, and the first information they had of it was from the King in Council. Monsr. de Vergennes and Monsr. le Garde des Sceaux were previously consulted : there is indeed every reason to believe that the former and Monsr. de Calonne act together in great harmony : Monsr. de Calonne is too well aware of the influence of Monsr. de Vergennes and the weight his opinion has with the King not to feel the necessity of keeping upon good terms

with him and to secure as far as he can the interest of that Minister.

However difficult it may be to foretell the result of this Meeting, it is nevertheless obviously the consequence of embarrassment in the Finances to which the Comptrolleur Général finds himself alone unequal and which he has not the courage to face. The good effects of this measure are already conspicuous: the paternal goodness of His Majesty in thus calling together a meeting of His Subjects of different ranks in order to concert means of general relief and benefit to the community at large is talk'd of in terms of the highest praise and satisfaction.

The friends and well-wishers of Monsr. de Calonne are warm in their encomiums upon him, while others less prejudic'd are persuaded that little real advantage is to be expected, and consider the measure rather as a proof of a pressing emergency, and that, unless some at present unforeseen expedient shall be hit upon, some new system of economy adopted for diminishing the civil establishment of the Royal Family, the arrears of debt must ever continue to be enormous.

It is imagin'd that something will be agitated at the Assemblée for the relief of the Protestants, but as that Body is by no means affluent little advantage is to be hoped for from any offers they can have it in their power to make.

It is said that the subject of the alienation of the Crown Lands (Les Domaines du Roi), by which no doubt a large sum of money might be rais'd for the exigencies of Government, will also be discuss'd: but whether such a Meeting will be thought competent to decide upon so important and delicate a business is as yet quite problematical, and indeed it is believ'd that nothing less than an Assembly des États du Royaume can give ample security to such as might become purchasers, and even then it is apprehended that few would be found to venture, since it is understood to be a fundamental law of the land that the King cannot alienate his patrimony and that no act, how comprehensive soever it might be design'd, can give to purchasers of Crown lands full and secure possession.

The transferring the internal customs of the Frontiers is also

full of difficulty and danger as it strikes at the root of the privileges of many of the Provinces of the Kingdom...

2. Dorset to Carmarthen, 11 Jan. 1787.

A Duty under the denomination of *Octrois*, which has been rais'd immemorially in the Province of Burgundy and against which the Parliament of Dijon presented a very strong remonstrance last year, has lately met with great opposition: and in consequence of the information communicated to Government of the violence of the proceedings on this occasion, Monsr. de Gouvernet, who commands in that Province, has receiv'd orders to send two Regiments in support of the King's authority.

All ideas of conciliation in the affairs of Holland appear to be given up, and the day before yesterday Monsr. de Vergennes dispatch'd a Courier to recall M. de Rayneval whose presence at Versailles is more indispensably necessary at this time on account of the indisposition of the Minister. . . . . .

Monsr. d'Adhemar takes leave this day and proposes to set out for London in the course of next week.

Several reports having appear'd in the English Newspapers respecting Chamoran who forc'd Mr. Mackay to sign a draft upon Messrs. Drummonds for £300 and afterwards fled to this City where he was seized I think it right to inform your Lordship that the said Chamoran is at this moment confin'd in a subterranean dungeon in the Bicêtre Prison with no other allowance for his subsistence than 3lb of bread every other day and a pitcher of water, thus to remain for life. His companion and accomplice was sent to the Salpêtrière where she is sentenc'd to remain 'till full enquiry can be made into the nature and degree of her crime.

A few trifling alterations have taken place in the nomination of the Notables, but I shall take care to send your Lordship a correct list of the whole as finally settled before the 29th., the day fixed for the first meeting. I send an account of the proceedings at the Assemblée des Notables held at Paris in the year 1626...

It is said that a large Camp, to consist of at least eighty thousand

men, is to be formed next summer, but the Maréchal de Ségur seems to be against the measure as too expensive.

Mr. Gataker left Paris very much satisfied with the attentions shewn him by Monsr. de Vergennes and Monsr. de Calonne; those Ministers having greatly facilitated for him the means of obtaining information which was the object of his Mission.

3. Dorset to Carmarthen, 18 Jan. 1787.

I send herewith a copy of a Paper which is dispersed about Paris. No event has happened lately to divert the Public from the topic of the Assemblée de Notables. The whole responsibility of this important step must necessarily lie on the Comptrolleur Général, who is said to have had it in contemplation for a considerable length of time, while he conducted his scheme in such a manner as to make it appear to the public in general entirely a measure of the King. What the particular points are which are to come under the consideration of this Meeting, and in what order and manner they are to be treated, are circumstances as yet unknown to the persons call'd together, beyond what was signified to them in the circular Letter, viz. that they are to take into consideration the *amélioration des Finances; le soulagement des Peuples;* and *la correction des abus.* It may therefore be presum'd that some time will be taken up in settling these preliminaries.

The King himself will, I understand, open the Assemblée; The Garde des Sceaux is next to give a general information of the business upon which they are met, aud he is to be followed by the Comptrolleur Général who will enter at large into the detail of all the various matters that are to be brought forward for enquiry and discussion. The Assemblée will immediately afterwards adjourn for a few days previous to its entering upon business.

The Baron de Breteuil the other day held a Council for Monsr. de Vergennes and has receiv'd the King's commands to receive the Foreign Ministers at dinner on Tuesdays whenever it may happen that Monsr. de Vergennes is prevented by a multiplicity of business from giving them their audiences as usual.

I can with safety assure your Lordship that this alternative is matter of no small concern to the Corps Diplomatique in general...

4. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
25 Jan. 1787.

The Assemblée de Notables is put off to the 7th. of next month... It is not yet determin'd whether or not the Public are to have admission to hear the Debates.

Monsr. de Vergennès is still unequal to the fatigues of his office: the Baron de Breteuil continues to act at Council as Minister of Foreign Affairs... Various Persons are talk'd of as Candidates to succeed Monsr. de Vergennes, in case that Minister may find himself oblig'd to retire ; amongst others Monsr. de St. Priest (late Ambassador at Constantinople), Monsr. de la Vauguyon, and the Baron de Breteuil are particularly named, but it is difficult to say who is most likely to be preferred.

The Dividends of the Caisse d'Escompte sink very much in consequence of the intimation the Public have receiv'd that the King requires eighty millions in order to insure a permanent Establishment to the Company. These Dividends each of 8,000 livres Tournois are fallen to 6,450 and it is expected they will be yet lower on the idea which prevails that the Company, if it were to close its accounts, would scarcely be able to pay more than 4,000 livres each. Five Members of that Body are nam'd to treat with Monsr. de Calonne upon this ticklish business.—I send your Lordship a Memoire on the state of the Hotel de Dieu which is well drawn up and worthy of perusal. I add likewise a Prospectus, printed by order of the Baron de Breteuil which is evidently pointed against the Comptrolleur Général: your Lordship may easily perceive the same coolness between that Minister and the Baron de Breteuil still subsists.

One of the two Ships sent out by the East India Company for China missed her passage and was oblig'd to remain at the Isle de France ; her cargo consisted entirely of Piastres. It is reported that great dissentions prevail amongst the Agents of the Company which no doubt will ultimately prove very prejudicial to its

interests: In consequence of this intelligence the original sums subscrib'd have fallen in the proportion of 1650 to 1000.

5. Dorset to Carmarthen, 1 Feb. 1787.

The secrecy which those who are at the head of affairs continue to observe with respect to the objects which are to be brought forward at the approaching Assemblée de Notables keeps the Public in a state of the most anxious expectation: Nor are the Individuals, who are to compose this much-talk'd-of convocation, themselves better informed of the nature of the important affairs that are to be submitted to their consideration: They are consequently precluded the advantages of the preparation so evidently necessary for a competent knowledge of the several subjects...

A Messenger arriv'd last night from Petersburgh with the Ratification of the Treaty between this Court and Russia which was signed at that Capital the middle of last Month, the Messenger having left Petersburgh the 15th.

6. Dorset to Carmarthen, 8 Feb. 1787.

The indisposition of M. de Vergennes still continues to be very serious...

There are various conjectures in regard to a successor to the Comte de Vergennes, but no new Candidates worth mentioning have been named since I had last the honor of writing to your Lordship. Monsr. de Calonne is much recover'd and, tho the Assemblée de Notables is again put off *sine die*, it is expected that an early day in next week will be fix'd for its meeting.

Monsr. de St. James, the Treasurer of the Navy, has declared himself a Bankrupt and surrender'd himself at the Bastille, where he still remains, for a sum little less than a million sterling.

This Person is known to have advanc'd very large sums to People in great power at Versailles and there is the greatest reason to presume that Government, had it been able, would have come to his assistance.

Monsr. Bizouard, first Clerk of Monsr. de St. James, is appointed to fulfill the engagements the latter had enter'd into for the Navy and Colonies, and has already begun to make the payments. A Commission at which Monsr. Le Noir, late Lieutenant-Général de la Police, is to preside has been appointed to examine into the state of Monsr. de St. James' Affairs and the King is to be paid the whole of what is due to him.

The House of Payens, Bankers, has stopp'd payment for a considerable Sum in consequence of large failures of some West Indian Merchants at Nantz. Other failures are also expected of sundry Houses which have been carrying on a circulation in concert with Monsr. de St. James.

The Comte de Conway, a Gentleman of Irish extraction and who served with reputation in the late war in America, is appointed Governor General of the French Settlements in India, and will, it is expected, take his departure in a very short time.

An account is arriv'd by the way of Marseilles of the Capitain Pacha having been assassinated in Egypt, but I am not certain that there is good authority for this report.

7. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
13 Feb. 1787.

...It may be a difficult matter to find a Successor who shall prove himself so much attach'd to the peace and tranquillity of Europe in general, and I can venture to affirm to your Lordship that the object Monsr. de Vergennes had nearest his heart was to cultivate a lasting friendship between England and France as the most effectual means of checking the ambitious views of other Powers. I cannot therefore but be of opinion that England as well as France has to lament the loss of a Minister possessing such a disposition.

Many are put in nomination by the Public to succeed to the Department of Foreign Affairs. Monsr. de la Vauguyon ; Monsr. de St. Priest ; Le Baron de Breteuil (who it is thought would rather continue in his present situation) ; Monsr. de Montmorin ; L'Archivêque de Thoulouse ; Monsr. Le Duc de Châtelet (late

Ambassador in England) and the Comte O'Dunne (late Ambassador from this Court to Lisbon) are severally mention'd ; but of all these Candidates the two first, one or other of them is most likely to be fix'd upon. Monsr. de la Vauguyon having been always much approv'd of by Monsr. de Vergennes, while Monsr. de St. Priest is suppos'd to be secretly recommended by Le Baron de Breteuil. It is however probable that I shall have it in my power to inform your Lordship more particularly and with more certainty upon this matter by my Despatch of next Thursday.

Monsr. de Calonne has lost his only Friend in the Cabinet ; for the Garde des Sceaux, who was always consider'd to be attach'd to Monsr. de Vergennes, is of too timid a character to avow himself in support of the Comptrolleur Général now he stands single. Monsr. de Calonne is daily recovering his health and it is said that the first meeting of the Assembly des Notables will certainly be held on Wednesday the 21st. of this month.

8. Dorset to Carmarthen, 15 Febr. 1787.

...His Majesty has thought proper to appoint[1] Le Comte de Montmorin the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and yesterday he enter'd upon the functions of the Office. Le Comte de Montmorin, late Ambassador to the Court of Spain, is Governor of Brittany. I have not the slightest personal acquaintance with this Nobleman and therefore cannot inform your Lordship how far his manner and address may be agreeable : he is however generally allowed to possess abilities and the strictest principles of integrity and honor.

Monsr. de Calonne, who feels the loss of Monsr. de Vergennes, politically and ministerially more than any other person, has received the most flattering assurances from the King of His countenance and support during the sitting of the Assembly des Notables : and it is beyond a doubt that, whatever may be the efforts employed by the enemies of the Comptrolleur Général to

[1] Armand Marc Comte de Montmorin-Saint-Herem, (1745-1792). Murdered in the September massacres.

injure him in the opinion of the Public, His Majesty invariably views the conduct of that Minister with satisfaction and approbation.

A Report, which surprises me very much, strongly prevails that [1] Le Comte d'Aranda had solicited his recall from this Court, and that an account of his resignation having been accepted arriv'd here yesterday. It is moreover said that Le Comte Fernanunez, who had been named Ambassador to the Court of London is appointed to succeed him at this Place.

The only reason surmis'd for this sudden step is the precarious state of health of the King of Spain, in case of whose demise it is suppos'd that Le Comte d'Aranda would be immediately rais'd to first Minister by the present Prince of Asturias. That the real cause, whatever it may be, should as yet be unknown is not to be wonder'd at, as a mysterious conduct even in matters of the smallest importance has ever mark'd the character of Le Comte d'Aranda.

It is currently reported that the Parliament of Paris has been with the King to solicit an *État Civil* for the Protestants ; and it is imagin'd that that matter will be a principal subject of discussion at the Assembly des Notables...

9. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
22 Febr. 1787.

...It was the plan to form the Assembly into separate Committees over each of which a Prince of the Blood is to preside ; Monsieur, the King's Brother, being named President of the whole.

...Monsr. de Montmorin is now quite establish'd at Court.... Monsr. d'Aranda acknowledges his being recall'd, and says that he believes the Comte Fernanunez is appointed to succeed him at this Court.

10. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
25 Febr. 1787.

On Thursday last the King... open'd the Assembly des Notables with the following Speech from the Throne, which His Majesty deliver'd under much apparent agitation....

[1] Don Pedro-Pablo Abaraca y Bolea, Conde de Aranda (1718-1799).

As soon as His Majesty had concluded his speech M. Le Garde des Sceaux rose and deliver'd the following....

Le Garde des Sceaux concluded with signifying the King's wish that any of the Members should deliver their sentiments; upon which Monsr. d'Aligre, Premier President of the Parliament of Paris, immediately got up and assur'd His Majesty of the ardent wishes of the Parliament to contribute their efforts for the good of the Country and express'd how highly sensible they were of His Majesty's goodness in calling them together for so patriotic a purpose.

No sooner had Monsr. d'Aligre finish'd than the Archbishop of Narbonne (Dillon) rose with some warmth and spoke as follows....

The Archbishop of Narbonne having concluded Monsr. de Calonne in a speech which lasted an hour and a quarter enter'd very fully into the state of the finances of the Country and after laying down as a principle (however extraordinary it may appear) that it is not from economy that resources are to be expected but from an augmentation of the revenues, he proceeded to propose the different objects hereafter specified.

1. Impôt territorial partie en Nature & sans exception.
2. Assemblées Provinciales.
3. Assemblées des Districts.
4. Assemblées Paroissiales.
5. Suppression de la capitation de la Noblesse.
6. Suppression des Dixmes : autorisation d'aliener pour payer les dettes du Clergé.
7. Soulagement dans les Gabelles : remise de 10 millions sur les tailles.
8. Suppression de la traite intérieure (inland duties) ; les Bureaux portés aux frontiers.
9. Infédation des Domaines ; les Forêts réservés pour une nouvelle administration; suppression des maîtrises (freedom of corporations).
10. Liberté du commerce des grains avec permission aux Provinces de demander dans les circonstances défense d'exportation.

11. Suppression des corvées, remplacement en argent.
12. Simplification des frais d'administration dans toutes les parties même la maison du Roi.
13. Suppression des droits qui grevent les communautés & l'industrie.

Altho' these measures are said to be submitted to the judgement of the Assembly yet the Comptrolleur Général in the course of his speech gave the Members the fullest assurance of the King's determin'd resolution of carrying them into execution.

Thus concluded the business of the first meeting.

The next day, Friday 23rd., the Assembly met at 11 o'Clock, when Monsieur presided and open'd the meeting with a speech in which he particularly recommended discretion and secrecy with respect to the point that would be brought forward for discussion. His speech and manner of delivering it were much approved of.

Monsr. de Calonne spoke again on this occasion with the same precision and ability as on the former day. After which the Assembly was distributed into several different Boards, each consisting of 22 Members, and each having a Prince of the Blood for its President. viz. Monsieur—Le Comte d'Artois—Le Duc d'Orleans—Le Prince de Condé—Le Duc de Bourbon—Le Prince de Conti—and Le Duc de Penthièvre—taking separately cognizance of the matters before them.

From these several Boards, which are to sit every day of the week except Sunday, reports are to be made to the General Meeting...

These are all the particulars I have been able to collect relative to the proceedings of the Assembly to which no strangers (were) admitted, nor is at present permitted to print anything on the subject. It is said that the Clergy as well as most of the Nobility are much dissatisfied at part of the plan of the Comptrolleur Général which nearly affects them.

I hear also that the Province of Brittany is dispos'd to be unruly and does not approve of the choice of the Deputies : it is probable that Troops will be sent to bring them to reason.

11. Dorset to Carmarthen, 1 March 1787.

The first surreptitious version of the King's Speech at the opening of the Assembly, containing the substance but not the expressions made use of by His Majesty, was forwarded your Lordship from the necessity of sending the earliest accounts. A correct copy, publish'd yesterday by authority, is now inclos'd.

Provincial Assemblies, for a long while a favorite measure with the nation, and now standing foremost in the place of the Comptrolleur Général, pass'd the several Committees on Monday last the 26th. Ult :, with some alterations from the original plan.

The Impôt Territorial, the next great object and affecting most materially every Person of landed property in the Kingdom, could not fail of meeting with the utmost determin'd opposition, the several Committees losing sight of the discrimination evidently mark'd in the King's Speech between the discussion of the plans before them and the means to be deviz'd for carrying those plans into execution, are said to have gone largely into debate, so much so that His Majesty has since thought proper to forbid in the strictest manner all deliberation whatever upon the measures themselves, and it is thought that this step may possibly occasion a succession.

The strictest secrecy has been enjoin'd to all the Committees. Nothing can equal the anxiety of all ranks of people for the issue of these important affairs. In the mean time the King, pledged as He has said He is to all Europe to support His Ministers, is determin'd to carry everything through, which was evidently His Majesty's intention from the first as your Lordship may clearly perceive by that passage in the speech which I have underlin'd.

The Clergy are already inflamed to a great degree and the Archbishop of Narbonne who has taken the lead has deliver'd his sentiments with great freedom.

Brittany and Languedoc, as Pays d'États, must be very materially affected by these changes, and it is said they were determin'd to oppose them. Nothing new has transpir'd respecting the Pro-

ceedings since the 26th., an account of those of that day I send your Lordship annexed. The Committees meet twice a day, viz. at eleven o'Clock in the morning and at five o'Clock in the afternoon, in the respective apartments of the several Princes.

12. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
8 March 1787.

The following is the most accurate account I have been able to procure of the proceedings of the Notables since that contain'd in my Despatch No. 15, in which are given the Debates of the 27th. and of the 28th. of last month.—On the next day, viz. the 1st. of March, The Committees met as usual when, after much warmth on the part of several of the members, the *Impôt Territorial, or Tythe of the produce of land*, according to the original plan of the Comptrolleur Général, was entirely disapprov'd, and so universal was the disapprobation that His Majesty judg'd it expedient to order that five members of each Committee (exclusive of the Princes of the Blood, each of whom attended as President of His Board) should be chosen who should assemble the following day at the apartments of Monsieur ; this meeting accordingly took place on Friday, the 2nd. Inst., Monsr. de Calonne being present, who open'd the business by a very long and elaborate speech in which he explain'd the nature of the *Impôt Territorial* and the necessity of its being put upon the footing which he recommended.

The Comptrolleur Général supported his Plan in a very able manner, but the determin'd opposition it met with from all the Clergy as well as from many of the Nobility oblig'd him to relinquish his first idea of receiving the Impôt Territorial (or Tythe of Lands) in kind, and consent to a modus being adopted in its stead. This Meeting sat full five hours, which in this Country is consider'd as a very unusually long sitting.—On Saturday the 3rd. inst. the Committees resumed the original form of proceedings, and the Parochial Meetings as likewise the Meetings of Districts were adopted, but with very material alterations from M. de Calonne's Plan. These meetings are to report their proceedings to a provincial Assembly, and are to take cognizance of all matters that

relate to the Taxes which are to be paid by each Province... Annual Presidents to these meetings are to be chosen from amongst the Nobility, Gentry, and Clergy, after the three first years.

M. de Calonne was desirous of having the mode of election less confin'd and that any Person, possessing landed property in the annual value of £25 Stg, should be deemed qualified to be chosen President, but this idea was at once rejected by all the members of rank and property and of course given up by the Minister.

In the Meeting on Friday the 2nd. at the apartments of Monsieur, the Comptrolleur Général in the course of his speech was forced to acknowledge that the deficit in the current expences of the present amounted to no less a sum than 113 millions of livres Tournois, which has not fail'd to excite an universal alarm amongst the community at large and amongst the great Families in particular.

On Monday the 5th. the Committees sat upwards of five hours. No particular plan was agreed upon but a general recommendation from the several Boards that some measure should be adopted for effectually preventing abuses in the collection of the Revenues.— M. de Calonne is said to be firm on this point but leaves it to the Notables to decide upon such means as they shall think most likely to answer the purpose.

On Tuesday the 6th. The several Boards express'd great discontent at finding the Papers which were laid before them insufficient to enable them to devise any new plan of National reform.

On Wednesday the 7th. the want of the necessary Papers was more essentially felt as the decision of the members was call'd for. Many of them declin'd giving any opinion, and the Prince of Conti's board refus'd to a man entering on any deliberations on the subject 'till they should be permitted to examine into the annual expenditure, upon which His Highness sent to acquaint His Majesty with the resolution of His Board ; the consequence was an express order from the King that they should *deliberate* : The Prince however, seeing the determin'd disposition of His Board, thought it incumbent on him to wait upon His Majesty in Person, but He soon return'd to His apartments where the members still remain'd and told them with much emotion and embarrassment that the

King's Orders were positive and must be obey'd. What the immediate effect of this message was I have not been able to learn but it is certain that all the Boards have been directed to suspend their sittings, and it is thought that a general Meeting of the Whole Body of Notables will be summon'd in a few days at the [1] Hôtel des Menus plaisirs du Roi.

There never was known a time in this country when so much speculation and so many conjectures were form'd as at this moment ; to attempt to enumerate them would be intruding very unnecessarily on your Lordship's time, as it could not afford any useful information : it will, I hope, be thought sufficient that I lay before your Lordship, for the inspection of His Majesty and His Majesty's Ministers, such facts as I am able to collect. The low state of the Finances of this Country are sufficiently obvious when the Minister is oblig'd to have recourse to such extraordinary means in order to supply to the common out-goings of a Peace Establishment, so long as four years after the conclusion of a War.

It cannot be suppos'd that resources are wanting, but the means of getting at money and of putting it into circulation so as to establish the national credit seem to have requir'd more wisdom and contrivance than any French Minister has yet possess'd : nevertheless such is now the object of the present Comptrolleur Général.

It is by some believ'd that the General Meeting is to dissolve the whole, but I am not of that opinion : yet there is no saying what step may be pursued should the Members persist in demanding a state of the Expenditure (which for many obvious objects His Majesty cannot consent to make public) : some of them have already gone so far as to say *Que les États Généraux* (sic) ought to be assembled for the purpose of examining the accounts, and if that sort of Spirit should gain ground I should not be surpriz'd at any proceeding, however violent, of the Court.—In order to give your Lordship an idea of the manner of debating in the Committees, I will relate one instance.

Le Maréchal de Beauveau, who belongs to the Comte d'Artois's [2]

[1] This is where the States General met in 1789.

[2] Charles Juste de Beauvau (1720-1793) a very distinguished soldier.

Board rose and only observ'd that it must be impossible to discover where the evil lay unless further information was produc'd to the Committee, the Comte d'Artois immediately answer'd. "Monsr. le Maréchal, Puisque vous persistez dans votre demande J'en ferai part au Roi, Mon Frère, et *J'aurai soin de vous apporter sa réponse.*" This vivacity of His Royal Highness silenc'd M. le Maréchal and the Committee adjourn'd.

I have already observ'd to your Lordship that the Deficit for the present year amounts to 113 millions : the inclos'd Paper, which is copied from an account I have just now receiv'd will best explain to your Lordship the manner in which it is to be supplied tho' the Timbre (Stamp-duty) will not produce more than 35 millions; the Impôt Territorial about 52 millions and the savings about 20 millions which is six millions short of the sum demanded.

The inclos'd account states the Deficit at 112 millions only but it certainly amounts to 113 millions. These new modes of Taxes have excited the greatest animosity against Monsr. de Calonne particularly amongst the Clergy who have hitherto uniformly oppos'd all his plans.

13. Dorset to Carmarthen, 15 March 1787.

...I find that I gave an improper signification to the term *Impôt Territorial*, which, tho' I have in my subsequent Despatch No. 16 given the true meaning of it, I must beg your Lordship will order to be rectified by substituting *Tythe of land* in the room of *Land tax*.

No business was transacted on Thursday the 8th nor on the two following days, the Sittings having been suspended on account of the demand that had been made for an inspection into the expenditure of the public money, which His Majesty has not thought proper to consent to. On Monday last there was a General Meeting at which the Comptrolleur Général address'd the Assembly and in the King's name express'd His Majesty's satisfaction at the manner in which the business that had been laid before them had been conducted. He then inform'd the Assembly of the other

matters recommended for their deliberation. I must observe to your Lordship that as yet there are only two points resolv'd on-viz. Parochial and District Meetings, which are to report their proceedings to the Provincial Assemblies, and the *Impôt Territorial*, to be paid in money : these modes of collecting the Revenues I have already explain'd.

On Thursday the 12th. the several committees took into consideration the removing to the Frontiers the Gates of the Interior Provincial Towns, also the mode of collecting the tax upon Salt, and other inferior Duties. Upon these matters being propos'd for discussion, the Duc d'Orléans desir'd leave of His Majesty to withdraw himself from His Board, assigning for reason that He was too deeply interested in the resolution that might be taken upon these points to be certain that He should be able to form an impartial judgement thereon. The King granted His Highness's request and the Board proceeds in this business without any President, owing to an etiquette between the Clergy and the Nobility, on account of which it could not be settled which of those two Bodies has the precedency.

Should the alteration in the collecting the Gabelle, according to the plan propos'd, take place, the Duc d'Orleans will suffer a diminution in his Income of £30,000 Stg. Monsieur and the Comte d'Artois would also be very considerably affected, but it is of little consequence to them as the King would provide an equivalent for the relief of His Brothers which He is not dispos'd to do for His Cousin the Duc d'Orleans. The other Princes of the Blood will not be affected by the adoption of the new mode as They have no territory allotted to Them in the same manner that the Duc d'Orleans has owing to his much nearer alliance by consanguinity to the King.

On Wednesday the Prince du Conti (who has acquir'd great popularity by his firmness) went to the King and desir'd in the name of His Committee to have His Majesty's pleasure made known in writing : Monsr. de Calonne's speech at the General Assembly having occasion'd much surprize by the implication which it seem'd to contain of their assent to the objects which had been propos'd.

The Prince de Conti assur'd His Majesty that both Himself and His Committee differ'd in every respect as to the matter as well as the form of what had been propos'd by the Comptrolleur Général.

The King promis'd to signify his pleasure in writing.

A short time since the Protestants of [1] Ortez in Bearn, under an idea that the extention of their privileges (of late so much talk'd of) was intended to take place immediately by which they would be put in the same situation as before the revocation of the Edict of Nantz, went in a tumultuous manner and took possession of a Church belonging to the Catholic communion ; besides which they are said to have committed very serious outrages, to have beat the Priest and even to have kill'd several persons. The Parliament of Pau has taken cognizance of the Affair and an account has been sent to Government of the whole proceeding. It is worthy of Your Lordship's observation that no mention whatever has been made of the Protestants in the Assembly of Notables.

I send Your Lordship a Pamphlet just publish'd by the [2] Comte de Mirabeau which is said to be very severe against Monsr. de Calonne.

14. Dorset to Carmarthen, 22 March 1787.

...The whole of this last week has been employed by the Notables in the discussion of the means for altering the principal internal Duties of the Kingdom for the reciprocal benefit of the Revenue and the People. The Gabelle, or Duty upon Salt, it is thought will not pass under any new form 'till it has been referred to the Provincial Assemblies, as being best able to obtain new lights with respect to that mode of Taxation, and to produce a more exact account of its abuses.

It has however been proposed that the Provincial Assemblies should, upon paying severally a certain annual sum to the King for a certain quantity of Salt take the administration of that Duty

[1] Orthez the ancient Orthesium was Capital of Béarn. It was the head quarters of Protestantism in the South East of France.

[2] Honoré Gabriel Riqetti Comte de Mirabeau (1749-1791).

entirely into their own hands ; by which means the two Pounds of Salt which each Person in the Provinces is oblig'd to take, would be furnish'd to him at a cheaper rate than at present ; and when any further quantity should be required by Individuals, it would be deliver'd at so low a rate (one sol per pound) as would effectually prevent the fraudulent circulation of that Article from one Province to another. But this matter, as well as the removal of the Customs Houses to the Frontiers, has been unanimously deem'd to be an object propef to be submitted to the Provincial Assemblies.

The Duc d'Orléans, it appears, will not be so great a loser as was at first imagin'd, since instead of £30,000 Stg. His Highness, upon an enquiry into the Royal Duties He is entitled to, will not suffer an annual loss of £8,000 or at most £10,000.

The Proposition last brought forward is that of the King's Domaines which, with the utmost that can be made of them, will never produce more than from £80,000 to £100,000 Stg. Pr. An :, the Royal Forests not being included for this obvious reason that if those Forests (by which is to be understood the large tracts of Wood in this Country) were to get into private Hands, the desire of having quick returns would in all probability occasion in a short time a deficiency of fuel throughout the country and particularly at Paris, for the greatest attention is even now found very necessary, in order to secure the Capital from such a calamity, and notwithstanding that within these last two or three years a great quantity of Coal and Turf has been consumed in this city the apprehension of failure in the Article of Wood still prevails.

No time is mentioned for the dissolution of the Assembly of Notables, as the Comptrolleur Général has yet other matters to bring forward...

P.S. The different Stocks have fallen of late and India Bonds a day or two ago fell from 1600 to 1400 pr. share the livres Tournois.

15. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
22 March 1787.

It is strongly rumour'd here that the Empress of Russia has

insisted with the Porte that the Capitaine Pacha shall be dismiss'd, Her Imperial Majesty suspecting him of having secretly fomented the discontents in Circassia: Her Majesty is also said to have requir'd that an Ambassador should be sent from the Porte to compliment Her on Her arrival at Cherson, and likewise to have demanded in peremptory terms restitution of Territory in Budziac, which she claims as having been possess'd by Saim Gueray the last Khan of the Tartars.

The Porte, provok'd at these unwarrantable and haughty demands, has return'd a very spirited answer and has recalled the Capitaine Pacha from Egypt to take command of the Troops which have receiv'd orders to assemble at Oczakow where the account says that Magazines are actually forming.

Monsr. de Simolin does not give credit to these reports nor can I take upon me to say how far they are to be depended upon, yet upon the whole they seem to carry with them such an air of probability that I should think myself remiss was I to omit communicating them to your Lordship.

On Tuesday last an order was issued for taking into custody M. de Mirabeau, who however got intimation of it from some of his Friends in time to make his escape, and it is suppos'd he is gone to England, having before he quitted Paris secur'd his Papers which were of the utmost consequence to him. A Lettre de Cachet was also issued against the Abbé d'Espagnac, a Person well known for his great dealings in the Funds, particularly India Stock. He has thought it most prudent to surrender himself, and has in consequence had an interview with Monsr. de Calonne, who has promised him three months to settle his Affairs, during which time no further steps will be taken against him.

On Saturday last the son of the King of Cochinchine was presented to Their Majesties, and, tho' only seven years old, behav'd himself on the occasion with great propriety. He is brought hither at the request of His Father by a French Missionary to solicit the assistance of His Most Christian Majesty in the recovery of His Kingdom from which he has been driven. Two Battalions of 600 men each are ask'd for: in the meantime the

King is retir'd to a small Island near His own coast, where He waits the event of His Son's mission. His promises to the French, to induce them to comply with his request, are very great amounting to the establishment of a Factory for Them on his Coast: nothing however is yet decided upon, nor, I should think, will any step be taken 'till it is known in what light such an undertaking, which might eventually affect Our China trade, would be consider'd by Great Britain.—It is nevertheless said, but I am inclined to believe without foundation, that several of the Nobility have applied for the command of this Expedition in case it shall take place...

16. Enclosure in the above Despatch.

The following severe verses have been written and handed about since the publication of M. de Mirabeau's Pamphlet.

" Puisse ton homilie, O pesant Mirabeau,
Ecraser les fripons, qui gâtent nos affaires:
Un voleur converti, doit devenir bourreau,
Et prêcher sur l'échelle en rouant ses confrères."

17. Dorset to Carmarthen,
29 March 1787.

Accounts have lately been receiv'd from the Isles of France and Bourbon which mention that two English Ships having on board four hundred men had sail'd from Bombay and taken possession of the Island of Diego Gorcia (or Gorcie) to which Place Monsr. de Soulhiac, knowing it to be abandoned by the Europeans, had some time before despatch'd one Norman a Frenchman with a small detachment with orders to establish himself there: but Norman finding the Island untenable on account of the scarcity of water and other local inconveniences had quitted it and brought away his people. The accounts however add that the French Flag was flying at the time the English landed tho' there were then only a few Blacks on the Island. This intelligence, particulars of which are variously represented, seems to have occasion'd some alarm here.

There is a General Meeting of the Notables to-day.—The four Propositions inserted in the Journal de Paris, which I send inclos'd, have been discussed with great difference of opinions in the several Committees.

I send your Lordship all that I have been able to obtain but which I have reason to believe is a tolerably exact account of what pass'd in the Duc d'Orleans's Bureau, where there appears to have been so much opposition to Monsr. de Calonne's proposal, that it seems almost impossible any material alteration in the mode of collecting the Salt Duty can be attempted. Had this Plan and that of the General Land-Tax met with the approbation of the Assembly, the monied people of this City were ready to advance one hundred and twenty millions of livres tournois to Government but it cannot now be foreseen to what expedient the Comptrolleur Général will have recourse.—Two other Propositions are to be laid before the Assembly this day, but what they relate to has not transpir'd, nor indeed does anything come to light, well authenticated, excepting what the Minister chooses shall be known. It is thought the Assembly will not be dissolv'd before the beginning of May.

18. Dorset to Carmarthen, 1 April 1787.

The Memoire which I have the honor of sending to your Lordship has just made its appearance, and, as it contains the first authentic information respecting the measures propos'd at the Assembly of Notables, I have thought proper to dispatch a Courier on purpose in order to forward it to your Lordship as early as possible rather than defer sending it so long as 'till Thursday the ordinary course of conveyance.

I have not yet been able to procure a Copy of Monsieur de Calonne's Speech at the General Assembly held last Thursday, but I make no doubt that it will be printed in a few days.—One Reform has already taken place viz—the abolishment *des Saintes Chapelles*: it has hitherto been the custom to keep up the ceremony of a Royal *Messe* at all the several Palaces belonging to His

Majesty in the different parts of the Kingdom, tho' it has ever been consider'd as a useless expence: the saving to Government by this measure will be about £12,000 Stg. pr. Annum...

19. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
dated Paris, 5 April 1787.

On Friday last the Assembly of Notables took into consideration the means of alienating the Crown lands, but without being able to remove the grând objection arising from the constitution which renders all alienation revocable by the Successors of the reigning Monarch.

It seems therefore to be unanimously understood by the Assembly that the utmost that can be done is to dispose of, for the term of the King's natural life only, such Lands as are still free from mortgage and encumbrance; tho' by an operation so restrictive the views of the Minister in point of finance will be very far from being fulfill'd.

On Saturday last the same subject was again discuss'd without producing any decision.

Les Eaux and les Forêts are at present before the Assembly.

The inclos'd is an Extract of what pass'd last Monday at the Prince of Conty's Committee upon the Advertisement prefix'd to the Memorials which I had the honor of sending to your Lordship.

It is said that some others also of the Bureaux have desir'd leave of the King to publish their Proceedings and that His Majesty has been graciously pleased to grant their request: but your Lordship may depend upon it as certain that the King is fully resolv'd to support the Comptrolleur Général to the utmost however hostile to that Minister may be the measures pursued by the Notables; and that if particular Members shall appear determin'd to continue their persecution of him, His Majesty may be induc'd to dismiss the Assembly sooner than He at first intended.

The several Bureaux adjourned last Tuesday 'till Wednesday in next week. Their deliberations have been carried on with some discontent, and hitherto very little progress has been made as to the objects that have been brought forward.

I send your Lordship a Letter just publish'd the Author of which is not known but it may be presumed that the publication of it was no secret to Monsr. de Calonne. The Clergy, who are particularly piqued against that Minister and have rais'd a clamour against him which it may be difficult to silence, in all probability will not be backward in producing an answer to the above mentioned Letter.—It is beyond a doubt that some considerable reform will be made in the *Maison du Roi*. The Chevaux Legers will probably be the first suppress'd, as will also be several Companies of the *Garde du Corps*.

It appears by an estimate given in of the Public expenditure that the expences of the Army amounted to forty millions of livres Tournois and those of the Navy to only ten millions : but it is at the same time to be consider'd that the great number of Forts and Garrisons on the Frontiers of the Kingdom must unavoidably be at all times a heavy charge upon the Nation.

It is generally believ'd that the Emperor and the Empress of Russia, aware as They are of the inability of France at this moment to assist the Porte in case of emergency, are likely to give serious alarm to the Divan by Their too near approach to the Seat of the Turkish Empire.

I learn that Monsr. de Soulhiac, upon receiving intelligence that the English had taken possession of the Island of Gorcie, dispatch'd a Frigate to demand restitution of it : however, as I understand that the Comte d'Adhemar has receiv'd instructions from his Court to represent this matter officially to your Lordship, I shall not think it necessary to trouble you with such precarious reports concerning it as may happen to come to my knowledge.

20. Dorset to Carmarthen, dated Paris, 10 April 1787.

On Sunday Evening His Majesty sent the Comte de Montmorin with a Letter, conceiv'd in terms of great kindness, to Monsr. de Calonne signifying to that Minister the impossibility of His continuing him any longer in His Service ; and on Monday Evening Monsr. de Fourqueux was appointed Comptrolleur Général. Mons.

de Fourqueux, who was born in the year 1718 and appears to be of a very weak and broken constitution is a Conseiller d'Etat and a Man of an exceedingly good character, but is thought to be by no means equal to an Office of so much complication and importance.

His Majesty has also thought proper to dismiss Monsr. de Miromenil from his office of Garde des Sceaux, and [1] Monsr. de Lamoignon, Un des Premiers Presidens du Parlement de Paris, is nam'd to succeed him.

Monsr. d'Aligre, first President of the Parliament of Paris, has retir'd and [2] Monsr. d'Ormesson it is said will be appointed in his room.

These changes have all taken place within the last three days.

It is generally believed that the Avertissement to the Memoire, publish'd under the authority of Monsr. de Calonne, which I sent to your Lordship last week by Lauzun, was the ground of a very strong Letter written by Monsieur to the King which states the entire disapprobation express'd by His Bureau of the contents of that Avertissement and is suppos'd to have been the immediate cause of that Minister's removal. Monsr. de Calonne is to have a Pension of seventy thousand livres Tournois settled upon him which is more by twenty thousand than has ever been granted to any former Comptrolleur Général.

The King offer'd a Pension to Monsr. de Miromenil which he declin'd accepting but recommended his Children to His Majesty's protection. Monsr. de Miromenil incurr'd the King's displeasure by his conduct towards Monsr. de Calonne whose Plans he appear'd to approve 'till the death of Monsr. de Vergennes happen'd when he immediately chang'd his ground and has since uniformly oppos'd him upon every occasion. It is somewhat extraordinary, but an undoubted fact, that it was determin'd on Wednesday last at the instigation of Monsr. de Calonne to dismiss the Garde des Sceaux, and on Sunday Monsr. de Calonne receiv'd his own dismission.

[1] Chrétien François II de Lamoignon (1735-1789) belonged to a distinguished family of the robe.

[2] Louis-François de Paule Le Fèvre Marquis d'Ormesson (1718-1789).

The Assembly of Notables which was adjourn'd to to-morrow is further postpon'd 'till Monday next. It is reported that a Select Committee, chosen from the Whole Body, will be appointed to carry into execution such part of Monsr. de Calonne's Plan as shall be found practicable : particularly that respecting Provincial Assemblies which are to take cognizance of all matters relating to the Taxes, to be paid by each Province...

21. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
12 April 1787.

...The changes that have taken place necessarily occasion a present delay in all public business at Versailles, but I hope to obtain in the course of a few days some positive answer from the Ministry respecting the unsettled claims of the Proprietors of Ships seiz'd before the commencement of hostilities, as well as in regard to other matters recommended to me by your Lordship...

I do not learn that anything is yet determin'd on in consequence of the young Prince of Cochine China's application to this Court ; it is however certain that, in consideration of the possible advantages to be procur'd to the French trade and Possessions in that part of India by a Friendly intercourse with that Kingdom, there is a strong disposition here to listen to the proposals that are made.

The Comte de Sillery (formerly known as Comte de Genlis) a Capitain in the Royal Navy, is particularly attentive to the young Prince and is anxious to engage Government to cultivate a connection which may in some degree help to counterbalance the exorbitant power (as he calls it) of the English in that part of the World.

[1] Mons. d'Aligre, First President, yet keeps his Place, but it is generally believ'd that he will very soon retire...

22. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
19 April 1787.

...On Saturday last His Majesty's pleasure was signified to Monsr. Neckar that he should quit Paris without loss of time and

[1] Etienne François d'Aligre (1726-1798.)

remove himself at a distance from the Capital of not less than twenty leagues. In consequence of which that Gentleman set out last Monday for Orleans where he proposes to remain for the present. Madame Neckar is not in a state to accompany her husband having been for some time disorder'd in her mind, but Madame de Stäel, his Daughter, proposes to follow her Father in the course of a few days ; This young lady is under great affliction on occasion of her father's banishment. The Pamphlet publish'd by Mr. Neckar, which I sent to your Lordship last week, has been the cause of this disgrace ; tho' for the present he is only enjoin'd to keep himself twenty leagues from Paris, it is not improbable that a fresh order will be given requiring him to retire to Geneva his native place. A Proceeding which thus protracts the return of a Man of Monsr. Neckar's superior abilities to the situation of Comptrolleur Général is certainly matter of satisfaction to all whose wishes are not to see the influence of this country too prevalent in Europe. Monsr. Neckar has many powerful friends, and the time may come when he may be call'd upon by the general voice of the Nation to take again the direction of the Finances.

Monsr. de Calonne has also receiv'd a like command from His Majesty, and it is added that he is positively forbid to answer Monsr. Neckar's late Publication. M. de Calonne is retir'd to an Estate of his at Arnouville near Verdun where he is permitted to see only his Relations and is strictly conjoin'd not to write any Letters or Memorials whatever in his own justification : the apparent severity of this last order is accounted for on the idea that the King is desirous of preventing, what might be apprehended, any impeachment on the part of the Parliament of Paris for malversation.—What will be the fate of the Notables cannot yet be guess'd : there is to be a general Meeting next Saturday. Several of the Bureaux have met since Monday last and they are all now sitting to finish their resolutions respecting the last Memoires presented to them. It is thought that no advantage can be made of the grants propos'd to be made *des Eaux et des Fôrets.* The King has signified to the several Bureaux His desire that they should confine their consultation to the matters before them, as your Lordship

will see by the *Ordre du Roi* a Copy of which is herewith inclos'd, to which also is annexed L'Arrêté au Bureau de Mgr. le Prince de Conti.

Monsr. de Fourqueux has already propos'd a Loan of eighty Millions upon life rents, there being literally no money at this time in the Royal Treasury to go on with, it is thought the subscription will soon be completed, as life-rents are eagerly sought after by People in this Country.

The newly appointed Garde des Sceaux, Monsr. de Lamoignon, meets with universal approbation : of course Monsr. de Miromenil will soon be forgot, tho' he has certainly gained great honor by refusing the offer of a Pension.

I send your Lordship inclos'd a Copy of His Majesty's Letter on the occasion with Monsr. de Miromenil's answer : it is however reported that His Majesty has since insisted on his receiving a Pension of forty thousand livres Tournois.

It is somewhat remarkable that Monsr. de Calonne on Wednesday the 4th of this Month enjoy'd the entire confidence of His Majesty and had even obtain'd a promise that the late Garde des Sceaux should be dismiss'd and at the same time that Monsr. de Lamoignon should be appointed to that Office : that on the Sunday following Monsr. de Calonne receiv'd his own dismission and that on that day se' ennight he is sent into banishment. Instances of changes so sudden and so various do not often occur...

23. Dorset to Carmarthen, 26 April 1787.

On Monday last His Majesty deliver'd before the Assembly of Notables the speech which I... send... inclos'd : the impression it made on the minds of all the Members was very great, but it does not appear that any material effect on the Public has been produc'd by it for the Funds still continue in nearly the same low state as they have been for some time past.

I also send... the Copy of a resolution of the Bureau at which Monsieur presides, which was presented to the King by that Prince, who... has given great satisfaction... by His attention to

Business... as well as by the propriety and great good sense with which He has all along conducted Himself...

P.S. I have just received a Copy of the resolution of another of the Bureaux, the Prince of Conti's, which I send your Lordship. The representations therein contain'd will probably give great umbrage to His Majesty.

24. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN.
26 April 1787.

On Tuesday last I acquainted Monsr. de Montmorin with the contents of your Lordship's Letter to the Comte d'Adhemar respecting the Island of Diego Garcia ; that Minister express'd much satisfaction at the adjustment of a business which, tho' in itself of small importance, might have been the cause of jealousy between the English and French who are entrusted with the Government of Affairs in India.

Monsr. de Soulhiac certainly will not have taken any violent step to obtain restitution of the Island as it appears by Mr. Boddam's Letter that a Vessel had been dispatch'd by the French Governor of Bombay to remonstrate against the proceedings of the Presidency and that in the mean time Orders had actually been sent by Mr. Boddam to relinquish the Island.

25. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN.
3 May 1787.

...The King has thought proper to require the services of the [1] Archbishop of Toulouse (Losmenil de Brienne) and His Majesty's pleasure was accordingly signified to that Prelate on Tuesday last that he should attend the Council as President of a Board of Finance which is to consist of four Members exclusive of the Archbishop and M. de Fourqueux. The four Persons said to be nam'd are Messrs. de Tholosan, de Villedeuil, de la Millière, and Vidau de la Tour, all of them Conseillers d'État.

Monsr. de Fourqueux quits the Office of Comptrolleur Général, but continues in the Council with the Department of Finance call'd

[1] Etienne Charles de Loménie de Brienne (1727-1794).

the Contentieux. The Archbishop (who certainly declar'd yesterday that he had a Plan ready by which, should it meet the King's approbation, there would be a reduction of full forty millions in the Expenditures) is to act for the present with the authority of Comptrolleur Général and is to enter immediately upon an examination into the State of the Finances, preparatory, as is suppos'd, to his being nam'd in the course of a few months Sur-Intendant des Finances and perhaps Premier Ministre in the same manner as was the late Comte de Maurepas.

As I have no personal acquaintance with the Archbishop of Thoulouse, I can speak of him only from report which represents him to be a man much respected both for his abilities and great application to business, as well as for his strict integrity. It has ever been his object and study to be of use to his Country as a Statesman, and from the character I have heard of him, there is reason to believe that he possesses every qualification necessary to do credit to the King his Master and to himself, provided that his health (which is rather delicate) added to sixty years of age shall permit him to continue a sufficient length of time in so important a station. How far England has a friend or not in the newly appointed Minister I cannot as yet take upon me to decide ; I am however inclin'd to suspect that our political situation with respect to the Cabinet of Versailles is scarcely so favourable as during the administration of M. de Vergennes and M. de Calonne.

Monsr. Neckar is now still farther remov'd from the object of his wishes ; the Archbishop having too much ambition and pride to condescend to seek the assistance of a Man who already possesses so considerable a share of the public estimation, and who himself has too much vanity to submit to act an underpart to any Minister whatever...

26. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
3 May 1787.

The Assembly of Notables, it is thought, will soon be dissolv'd ....

The following is a Copy of the Note which was written in the

King's own hand and deliver'd by Monsieur to the several Committees.

1. Suppression de huit millions sur le Departement de la Guerre.
2. D'un cinquiême sur les pensions audessus de dix mille francs.
3. Supprimer de L'Equipage, dit le Vautrey, (Boar Hounds) et de Chevaux dans les Ecuries.
4. Toutes les Pensions des Maisons Religieuses precedemment supportées par le Tresor Royal, supportées à l'avenir par la Caisse des Oeconomats. i. e. The Saving of the Livings and Church Preferments in His Majesty's gift of which the first year's salary, after the death of an Incumbent is to be paid into the King's Coffers.
5. La Somme des Pensions à l'avenir ne pourra jamais être portée au de là de dix huit millions.
6. Vente des Domaines de Choisy and de la Meute.

The new regulations respecting the Pensions are likely to create much embarrassment and uneasiness to many of the principal Families in this Country who will be sensibly affected by them.

Monsr. Gozard, who was confidential secretary to M. de Calonne, is appointed Director of the Royal Treasury under Monsr. de la Borde, and His Majesty has given orders for all the accounts that shall be requir'd by the Committees of the Notables to be laid before them without reserve.

I send your Lordship Copies of two letters from Monsr. de Montmorin and M. le Maréchal de Castries, by which you will see that the request of the Tobago Merchants is complied with. With respect to the other Memorial no answer can yet be expected, tho' I have every reason to hope that it will have a favourable issue.

I take this opportunity of mentioning... that the Memorial presented by the Comte d'Adhemar to His Majesty's Ministers relative to the Island Diego Garcia was entirely his own drawing up, and it is wish'd here that it had been express'd in more moderate language.

A melancholy account has been receiv'd from M. de la Peyrouse which mentions the loss of two of his Boats which had been sent by him to make Soundings on the Coast of California: eighteen of his People perish'd of which number ten were Officers, Two Sons of Monsr. de la Borde (formerly the Court Banker) were unfortunately drowned on this occasion to the great grief of their Family who are inconsolable at the loss of two very promising young men.

P.S. It was yesterday reported that a small Squadron of Ships of War was sail'd from Toulon towards the Archipelago.

27. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
10 May 1784.

...The inclos'd Edict (which has been register'd by the Parliament without any opposition) appear'd the day before Yesterday.

The Preamble is the substance of the Declaration which His Majesty gave to the several Bureaux last Monday.

An Address of thanks to the King was in consequence voted by the Bureaux of Monsieur and the Comte d'Artois, and it is expected that the other Bureaux will follow the example in the course of the week. A Committee of Five Members from each Bureau was appointed to meet yesterday at Monsieur's Apartments to deliberate on means for supplying to the Deficit, the amount of which is variously stated: the different accounts making it 140 millions: 125 millions: 116 millions: and none less than 113 millions, as given in by M. de Calonne.

The means that have been propos'd are as follows. 40 millions by reforms chiefly in the King's Household and Stables, in which calculation some of the great Pensions will perhaps be included: 15 millions by a Stamp-duty upon Paper and Parchment (call'd *Timbre*); 10 millions by a House-tax, 25 millions by an additional Land-tax, which the Clergy, who have hitherto been exempted from it, are to pay in common with the Nobility and Gentry; and 25 millions (the whole together making 115 millions) to be borrowed from the sinking Fund.

In case these regulations shall fail in the produce expected, all Pensions, it is thought, will be taxed indiscriminately to make up

the deficiencies. However these resolutions are to be reported to the several Bureaux and afterwards to the General Assembly before they will be adopted.

The Public Credit is somewhat better since the late Arrangements, but has not risen so rapidly as the well wishers of the Archbishop flatter'd themselves it would.

The general opinions, respecting the abilities of the Archbishop, are very different; his talents being by some consider'd as superior to those of any other man, while there are those who say *qu'il n'est qu'un homme mediocre;* all however agree that he has great ambition and that he aims at filling His Majesty's Council with his own Dependants. For this reason it is expected that the Maréchal de Castries will soon retire, since his known attachment to Monsr. Neckar can be no recommendation in his favour with the Archbishop: that the Maréchal de Ségur will continue in his Department 'till an active man is found to replace him: that the Baron de Breteuil will probably also remain, as it is his object to keep his Place; that Monsr. de Montmorin will stand rather upon an independent footing, tho' far from being at his ease with the Archbishop; and that Monsr. de Lamoignon, from his personal consideration, will keep his ground with His Majesty, unless some unforeseen jealousies should arise between him and the Archbishop.

What I communicate to your Lordship relative to the present situation of the French Cabinet I have collected from the conversations of Persons of fashion, and am therefore induc'd to believe it is more than problematical.

The Assembly of Notables will it is thought be dismiss'd on Wednesday next the 16th Inst.

On Tuesday last His Majesty reviewed the French and Swiss Guards on the Plaines de Sablon. The men made a very fine appearance, and so great a concourse of people never were known to have assembled on the like occasions.

His Majesty receiv'd with much apparent satisfaction the repeated echos of *Vive le Roi* during his retreat from the Field...

28. Dorset to Carmarthen, 17 May 1787.

I mention'd to your Lordship in my last Despatch that the Deficit had been variously stated before the Committee which met at Monsieur's Apartments on Wednesday the 9th. Inst. It is now found to be 147 millions according to the report made by the Bureau of Monsieur : 145 according to that of the Prince of Conti's, and 142 according to that of the other five Bureaux. It is therefore imagin'd that it will be found absolutely necessary to lay a Tax of one fifth upon Pensions of 1,000 livres up to 10,000—and a fourth upon all Pensions of above that sum. The difficulties in which the Notables find themselves do not arise from certain specific sacrifices which the necessities of the times point out and render unavoidable, but the deciding upon such taxes as may be adopted with the least inconvenience embarrasses them very much, as they are extremely unwilling to lay any additional burthens upon the People at large who, it is well known, are already but too much oppressed. The Plan of an equal Land-tax is still look'd upon as impracticable.

In the same Committee another Plan was presented by the Archbishop of Toulouse to supply to the Deficit, without touching the Pensions ; as follows. A Duty upon Paper and Parchment (called Timbre) 15 millions. The establishing on *one tenth* instead of *two twentieths* upon all landed and funded property, to be paid in equal proportion by every proprietor without exception will by simplifying the mode of collection, produce an increase of 25 if not of 30 millions. An annual Loan of 50 millions. *Les Bonifications Reforms* 40 millions, and a House tax calculated at 10 millions make in all 140 millions. There will still remain a Deficit-which, as it cannot otherwise be provided for, will in all probability make it necessary to have recourse to the Pensions. Several of the Bureaux have strongly recommended to His Majesty to a Council to meet every three or every five years in order to inspect the Finances of the Kingdom, but His Majesty's evasive answer to that point (which I send inclos'd) is by no means favorable to their wishes, and the dissolution of the Assembly which will certainly take place the

beginning of next week leaves room to conclude that the zeal which has animated that Body is not likely to be recompens'd by any future encouragement.

Monsieur and the Comte d'Artois have already inform'd His Majesty of their power and readiness to retrench 500,000 livres each in the Establishment of Their Stables. The Queen and the rest of the Royal Family will also considerably diminish Theirs. By way of supplement I send your Lordship a draft of the saving intended to be made in the different State Expenditures ; I cannot however answer for the correctness of the account, which may nevertheless serve to throw some lights on the subject.

The Edict for establishing the Loan of 80 millions was register'd by the Parliament on Monday the 7th. of this Month, without any opposition being made to it. Twenty-two millions of the Loan were subscrib'd on Saturday last and paid into the Royal Treasury.

I inclose to your Lordship copies of the proceedings of some of the Bureaux, together with the King's Answer. The resolutions of the Prince of Conti's Bureau are the most spirited and interesting.

29. Dorset to Carmarthen
31 May 1787.

It is difficult to determine whether His Majesty or His Majesty's Ministers were the better pleased at the dissolution of the Assembly of Notables ; there is however no difficulty in pronouncing that no such Assembly will again be call'd together during the present reign, unless some unforeseen calamity should befall the Country.

It is now upwards of three months since the first meeting, during which period there have been held fifty-one Bureaux at the apartments of the several Princes, and from ten to twelve private Committees by deputation from each Bureau. Upon the whole the Assembly undoubtedly conducted themselves with great temper and moderation, and too much cannot be said in praise of Monsieur and the Comte d'Artois who have throughout shewn their readiness to submit to every possible diminution of expence in their respective Establishments.

The Archbishop of Thoulouse may be consider'd as sole Min-

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ister : the name only is wanting : His speech on the last day of the Assembly has rais'd him very much in the public opinion, and his private character for integrity is unimpeachable. The Provincial Assemblies are likely to be of great benefit to the Nation, but it is to be hoped that the principle of liberty upon which they are founded will not extend itself beyond the bounds prescrib'd by the Monarch. The speeches which I sent to your Lordship last Sunday will best explain the means that have been recommended by the Notables as best calculated to make good the present Deficit and to prevent in the future so great an arrear. The Vautrais (Boar hunt) is reform'd and the horses (upwards of eighty in number) which were employ'd for it, were yesterday sold by public Auction.

I send your Lordship inclos'd Copies of the answers to my application respecting the Duty exacted from His Majesty's Packets at Calais, wherein is given a reasonable pretence for the continuance of that Duty 'till our Government shall think proper to put the English Packets upon the same footing as those of the French King which never take either Goods or Passengers.

The Affairs in Holland have taken a very serious turn : whatever may be the wishes of this Country the minds of the Stadtholder's adversaries appear to be so much inflam'd that the Cabinet of Versailles at present see little probability of good effects to be expected from their interference. It is the general opinion here that matters are likely to terminate very unfavourable for the Prince of Orange : the Dutch Ambassadors seem to be under the greatest apprehension for the issue of Affairs.

More publications concerning M. de Kornmann having appear'd I send them to your Lordship. M. le Noir's conduct is represented in a very unfavourable light : so much so that it is thought he would not have been permitted to remain a Member of the Assembly of Notables had that Body continued sitting.

30. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
7 June 1787.

...The Parliament, which is appointed to sit the 11th. of this month, is to take into consideration the most effectual means for

uniting the deliberations of the Provincial Assemblies. Dauphiné, formerly un Pays d'etat, is to be restor'd to its ancient privileges of which it was deprived by Louis XIII at the instigation of the Cardinal de Richelieu.

Some of the Bureaux represented against the Taxes that were proposed, particularly the Bureau of the Prince of Condé which strongly objected to that upon Houses, and it is thought that the Parliament will make great difficulties when the new Taxes are to be registered: it is even apprehended that His Majesty will be oblig'd on account of this opposition on the part of the Parliament to hold a *Lit de Justice* to enforce obedience; however opinions may perhaps change when the time comes for exacting the payment of the new Taxes, as nothing is intended to be done 'till the reforms are made and the abuses in the collecting of the revenue corrected, for the completion of which six months at least are requisite. The whole of the proceedings of the Assembly of Notables will be published in the course of a few days. The new Conseil des Finances will be named this week. Monsr. de Moussion is named Intendant of Rouen in the room of Monsr. de Villedeuil...

31. Dorset to Carmarthen.
12 June 1787.

...I can... assure your Lordship that this Court has no intention of taking any open or decisive part in the present disputes in Holland. The late Monsr. de Vergennes could never talk of the situation of that Country with any degree of temper as he consider'd England in a great measure the promoter of the internal discontents which prevail'd; yet nevertheless I firmly believe that the French Ministers would now heartily join with England in any measures to restore Peace and tranquility to the United Provinces.

I shall see Monsr. de Montmorin in the course of this day, and I will, agreeable to your Lordship's instructions, endeavor to learn what steps have been taken in the French Cabinet since the arrival of an Officer from Berlin charged with Despatches from His Prussian Majesty who, it is said, shews a disposition to take a warm and active part in support of the Stadtholder...

32. Dorset to Carmarthen, 14 June 1787.

In a conversation I held last Tuesday with Monsr. de Montmorin I found still further reason for being convinc'd that the French Ministry are at present by no means dispos'd to take part in the Divisions that prevail in Holland, and I could perceive that the King of Prussia is not so warm in his support of the Stadtholder as may have been suspected, at least He has so express'd Himself to this Court. The Prince of Orange and his advisers do not stand high in the opinion of the French Cabinet and indeed their conduct meets here with some degree of contempt. By the Minister's manner of expressing himself to me it appear'd that he entertain'd some suspicion that the [1] British Plenipotentiary at the Hague had ever had great influence in all the decisive measures that have been adopted by the Stadtholder's Party, but whether his suspicions were grounded upon fact or mere surmise I was not able to discover with certainty. I held out to Monsr. de Montmorin in as cautious a manner as possible how much I believ'd it to be His Majesty's wish to see tranquility restor'd to the Republic, and I was assur'd by that Minister that the views of the King His Master were equally directed to that object, which he seem'd to think in the present alarming crisis, was most likely to be effected by leaving the States-General to settle matters without the interference of any foreign Power : If His Prussian Majesty is of the same opinion, it appears to be the best security for the repose of Europe. I cannot help giving it as my opinion that any proposal to that effect coming from Great Britain would be receiv'd with cordiality by this Court ; but I think it necessary to add, what I should not without good reason observe to your Lordship, that some proof of our sincerity, so far as witholding any further interference in the Dutch Affairs, must be given before we are to expect entire confidence at Versailles.

Your Lordship may be satisfied that no military preparations are going on either in the Army or Navy of this Country...

[1] Harris, afterwards Earl of Malmesbury.

There will be an annual saving of £12,000 Stg. by the appointment of one Intendant du Commerce instead of four.

The Parliament met last Monday the 11th. His Majesty sent to that Body to register the Edicts relative to the Provincial Assemblies, the freedom of the commerce of Corn, and also that (it is said) which abolishes *la Corvée ;* and to-morrow a general meeting will be held for that purpose. Those respecting the new Taxes will, it is thought, meet with some difficulty, and it is still expected that it will be found necessary that a *Lit de Justice* should be held to carry them into effect. I cannot ascertain for what number of years it will be expedient to continue the Loan of 50 Millions. No additional Taxes besides those I have already mention'd will be rais'd for the present. The reforms will amount to if not exceed forty millions : in the printed account of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Notables which will shortly be publish'd, an accurate account will be given of the different resources for supplying to the Deficit. *Les Corvées* will be regulated by the Provincial Assemblies : they do not in any way regard the King's Revenue...

33. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
21 June 1787.

...There is no doubt, I believe, that the further the enquiries go, the greater appears to be the Deficit, and it is a certain fact that there has been an expenditure of fifteen millions in M. de Calonne's administration for which no vouchers whatever can be found : His Majesty has on this account conceiv'd so unfavourable an opinion of that Ex-Minister that his Office of Treasurer to the Order of the Saint Esprit has been requir'd of him accompanied with an express command from His Majesty that he should no longer wear the Insignia of that Order : a mark of disgrace never inflicted excepting under circumstances of very great disapprobation...

It is believ'd that the French who see very clearly the tendencies of the animosities in Holland, are using their utmost endeavors to get the States-General to apply to them for their mediation ; and it is equally credited that the Patriotic Party who are not blind to

the backwardness of their friends in this Country, have indirectly thrown the blame on M. de Veyrac, and have made very loud complaints against him. M. de Lindau, the King of Prussia's Messenger Extraordinary is soliciting that some Person may be sent to Holland in order to concur in the plan of conciliation propos'd by His Prussian Majesty...

34. Dorset to Carmarthen, 21 June 1787.

The Parliament has continued sitting since the 11th. inst : and a fourth Edict has been sent for their deliberation, the purport of which is to give security for the last Loan of six millions by mortgaging the Land Tax : to-morrow is fix'd for registering the above Edict and likewise the others which I mention'd to your Lordship in my Despatch No. 41. The Princes of the Blood and the Peers are, at the particular request of the Parliament to be present, and Committees, from which the Princes of the Blood will be exempted, are to be chosen from amongst the Members and Peers, to sit the whole summer, which are not only to take cognizance of all matters concerning Finance and the abuses in collecting the Revenue, but are also to determine on means for raising further supplies in such a manner as shall relieve as much as possible the laborious and industrious part of the Nation.

The Salaries of the new Intendans des Finances are fix'd at the moderate sum of 15,000 livres Tournois Pr. An : each, and M. de Tolozan Intendant du Commerce has the same allowance.

There appears to be no small difficulty about the registering of the several Edicts sent by the King to the Parliament : that which is to establish the Provincial Assemblies contains a clause which enacts that whenever there shall arise any point of difficulty which cannot be settled by the Assembly in which it is debated, it shall be referr'd to the Council of State. The Parliaments do not acknowledge the supremacy of this Tribunal and consequently demand that this clause should be erased. But not only this particular clause but also the Principle of the Provincial Assemblies has been much combated ; a circumstance by no means to be

wondered at, as their establishment must necessarily very much diminish if not in the end entirely annihilate the authority and importance of the Parliaments.

The Meeting appointed to be held to-morrow will in all probability throw some new light upon this subject. I have just heard that the Stamp-Tax which was not expected to have been propos'd 'till after a State of the retrenchments of the Expenditure should have been laid before the Public is amongst the Edicts now before the Parliament.

35. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN.
25 June 1787.

It was confidently asserted last Saturday night that orders had been sent to Brest to equip a Fleet of twelve Sail of the Line for the Channel immediately, and had this intelligence gained credit I should not have delay'd sending a Messenger to give your Lordship the earliest information of such a measure, but there was no confirmation of the report yesterday, tho' it is still believ'd generally that orders have been sent to hold in readiness that number of Ships ; however no idea is entertained of their Sailing unless further Naval preparations on our part should create an alarm.

I take this opportunity of sending your Lordship the Edict of the Parliament respecting Provincial Assemblies : if all the Arrêts of His Majesty's Council should meet with no more difficulty than this has done, there will have been a short and quiet Session : but it is said that the Timbre, the House-Tax and *le commerce des Grains* will be strongly oppos'd. The Princes of the Blood attended the last Meeting in their usual form : They are also to be present at a Meeting this day and at another to be held in the course of the week.

36. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
26 June 1787.

Notwithstanding the information I gave your Lordship in my last letter... I have thought fit, in consequence of a conversation I have this day had with Monsr. de Montmorin, to dispatch Staley

without loss of time to assure you on the part of that Minister that no naval preparations are carrying on by France with any intent to *put a Fleet to Sea*, tho' he acknowledg'd to me that orders had been sent to Brest *to be prepar'd* in case our Fleet should be further re-inforc'd: M. de Montmorin added at the same time that the intentions of the King his Master were entirely pacific and that no steps would be taken by His Most Christian Majesty's Servants which might give uneasiness to Great Britain or to tend to interrupt the harmony which happily subsists between the two Countries: I further discover'd that it is the real wish of this Court to bring about a reconciliation between the contending parties in Holland, and that the Stadtholder be induc'd to accede to terms which, considering the distracted state of His Country, would not be thought in any degree disgracefull or humiliating to Him. It is very material for me to be inform'd how far I may venture to assure Monsr. de Montmorin that no alarm is meant to be given by our sending to Sea so considerable an armament which certainly appears to have rais'd some suspicion: He has been so frank and open with me upon the subject that I wish to have it in my power to shew myself equally so to him, which however I cannot venture to be without further instructions for that purpose from your Lordship.

The Princess of Orange *has very great influence* over the King of Prussia and it is undoubtedly owing to Her that His Prussian Majesty has hitherto given his support to the Stadtholder...

37. Dorset to Carmarthen, 28 June 1787.

On Monday last the Edict (herewith inclos'd) respecting the *Commerce des Grains* as well as that for the abolition of the Corvée were register'd by the Parliament without any material opposition, the Princes of the Blood and the Peers being present.

It is believ'd that nothing but the exigencies of the times could have induc'd the Parliament to consent to pass the Edict which establishes the Provincial Assemblies, but this, like all the others, seems to be requir'd of them by the people at large; any resistance

therefore would be of little avail. The Timbre is to be propos'd to-morrow.

An Association has made an offer to Government to farm that Tax at fifty millions Pr. An; an enormous sum, considering that its produce had been estimated by the Archbishop of Thoulouse at only sixteen millions; yet it is doubted whether this proposal will be accepted, so great are the expectations of Government from this new *Impôt*.

I am sorry that it has not yet been in my power to ascertain, for your Lordship's information, for how many years the Annual Loan of fifty millions will be requir'd by Government; all I know of it at present is that no fix'd period has ever been nam'd for the discontinuance of it; We are however still in expectation of a printed account of the proceedings in the Assembly of Notables (the publication of which it may be presum'd is postpon'd only 'till the Parliament shall have register'd all the Edicts for the new supplies) which probably will give a full and clear statement of the ways and means to be employed for supplying to the Deficit.

The French Navy is in good condition; their Ships being in such a prepar'd state that they have it in their power to put to sea a considerable Force in a short time: the greatest attention having been paid to their marine and Dockyards ever since the conclusion of the War. No movement whatever amongst the French Troops in Flanders has as yet taken place, nor is any expected. There are in those Provinces in Garrison about 36 Battalions and about 16 Squadrons, amounting altogether to from 18 to 20,000 Men.

A strong opinion prevails amongst some of the members of *the Salon* that the British Fleet is destin'd for the East Indies, and some whose opinions have weight with the Ministers have suggested that, in case the province of Zealand should be separated from the union with the others, in the English interest by the violent commotions that distract the Republic, England will take possession of the Cape and of Trincomalé in the name of that particular Province as having so large a share in the direction of the Affairs of the Dutch East India Company.

The Works at Cherbourg are carried on with great alacrity.

Another Cone was sunk a few days ago, and four others are nearly ready ; there are besides five more forming which are intended to be completed in the course of the year 1788...

38. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
28 June 1787. 12 *o'clock at Night.*

I have this moment been inform'd from good authority that it was this morning resolv'd at Versailles to form an Army to consist of twenty-five Battalions at Givet in Flanders (situated upon the Meuse between Marienburg and Charlemont) under the denomination of *Armée d'Instruction.*

M. de Rochambeau is to command in chief and the Duc de Laval and the Comte d'Esterhazy, (Governor of Valenciennes) are said to be appointed to commands under him. There will be no Cavalry, and these Troops will not be got together before the Month of August.

39. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
5 July 1787.

...With respect to the pacific disposition of this Court, I can only repeat again... what I have before observed, and what Mr. Eden will better explain to You in person, than I can by letter : Yet I do not pretend to say how far the Cabinet of Versailles might be disposed to listen to propositions, the acquiescence in which should give the appearance of their leaving their Friends in Holland in the lurch ; at the same time I am persuaded that nothing but terms derogatory to the National Honour, would at this critical moment induce the Ministers of France to risk the consequence of a Rupture with England.

It is also my opinion that it is by no means the wish of His Most Christian Majesty's Servants to see the Constitution of the Republic changed, nor what they conceive to be the Constitutional rights of the Stadtholder subverted. Their language certainly expresses that it is His Most Christian Majesty's desire that a fair, and just proportion of power be established in every branch of the legislature, the violation of which by each party having produced a spirit

of animosity that has arisen to such a height as to require the mediation of Foreign Powers to affect the re-establishment of tranquility by a reciprocal bonâ fide arrangement, such as the Ministry here seem to think may be accomplished without prejudice to the Constitution of Holland, and without wounding the delicacy of the Prince of Orange. If Your Lordship shall think proper to communicate to me, either in a public, or private manner the terms which His Majesty wishes should be acceded to by this Court, I shall find no difficulty in mentioning them in such a manner as not to create alarm, reserving at the same time, the power of shifting our ground, rather than incur the necessity of proceeding to extremities : I must add that whatever Instructions Your Lordship may determine to furnish me with in the course of this business I cannot but wish they should be such as may give me the advantage as well as satisfaction of treating frankly and openly with a Minister whose integrity I do not find any reason to question, and who I am satisfied would not hold out to me a language that does not convey the real Sentiments of His Most Christian Majesty on this critical, and important occasion.

I should likewise be glad to have the earliest information of any Armaments by Sea, or Land, that shall be carrying on in England, as the smallest appearance of activity in either of the War Departments might create jealousies here, and must of course weaken the assurances I am instructed to give, of our Pacific Disposition.

The Troops under orders to assemble at Givet have no fixed time named to them for that purpose, it is even doubtful whether any Camp will be formed, it seeming to depend altogether upon the proceedings in England. No Generals are as yet appointed to this small Army, nor will any be called upon while there remain hopes that the Mediation of Great Britain and France may be able to restore tranquility to the States-General...

40. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
5 July 1787.

I send your Lordship inclos'd the last Edicts that have been register'd by the Parliament ; that respecting *les Corvées* is referr'd

directly to the consideration of the Provincial Assemblies. One alteration from the original project was, with His Majesty's consent agreed to viz. that a tenth instead of a sixth should be paid by those on whom the Land-Tax is rais'd ; after which it passed unanimously. The Edict for suppressing the Rights of the Lord High-Admiral in different parts of the Kingdom is also pass'd with a modification in favor of some of the Ports relative *au lestage et délestage* (the putting in and taking out ballast).

The Stamp-Duty has not yet pass'd ; it came on last Monday, the Princes of the Blood being present as usual, when several of the members were particularly pointed in their speeches at the enormous expences of the Court, and some went so far as to say that Their Majesties ought not to remove from Versailles to Fontainebleau at a time when the Kingdom is so severely oppress'd with Taxes owing to a want of economy in every department of the State : at the same Meeting it was resolv'd by a majority of ninety votes to forty-two that, before the Parliament could proceed to register the Timbre (Stamp act), His Majesty should be humbly intreated to order to be laid before that Body the real state of the receipt and of the public expenditure. It is difficult to say whether this opposition proceeds from an unwillingness to pass this act or whether it is only to demonstrate to the World for the sake of Parliamentary dignity that they do not in everything implicitly obey the King's commands : a short time will however elucidate this conduct of the Parliament, but how hostile soever to His Majesty's Government may be their intention Your Lordship may be certain that the Edict will in the end be pass'd conformably to the King's wishes, and in all probability without his being under the disagreeable necessity of holding a *Lit de Justice* for that purpose.

It has been strongly reported that M. de Calonne had left the Kingdom, but it is known for certain that he is still at Armouville : he was very roughly treated by several Members of the Parliament last Monday, which gave rise to the above report.

The order sent to him by His Majesty to return the Insignia of the Order du St. Esprit has affected him very sensibly, and the

World in general think him hardly us'd, when it is a certain fact that he benefited neither himself nor any of his family during the time he remain'd in His Majesty's Service: the case was very different with the late Duc de Choiseul, when he was dismiss'd, himself, family and friends were all liberally pensioned and otherwise provided for...

41. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
6 July 1787.

I have this evening receiv'd Monsr. de Montmorin's answer to the Letter which I had written to him in consequence of your Lordship's Despatch No. 12. I send your Lordship inclos'd my Letter to that Minister together with both his answers. Had I been made acquainted with the steps which were previously taken I should not have thought it necessary to trouble His Most Christian Majesty's Servants to obtain any further explanation on the subject, but being entirely ignorant of the private agreement between M. de Montmorin and Mr. Eden to exchange in writing their respective conversations, I implicitly obey'd your Lordship's instructions not entertaining any suspicion that those conversations were of such a nature as to render any further question upon that important matter *inutile*, which, to say the truth, might have been convey'd to me without waiting His Majesty's return from Rambouillet. It is however with great satisfaction I can acquaint your Lordship that the disposition for tranquility still prevails in the French Cabinet, and I can equally assure you that His Most Christian Majesty's *manner of thinking* in regard to the Affairs of the Republic of the United Provinces will not induce His Ministers to hold any other than pacific language towards Great Britain. In the present relative situation of the two Courts it may perhaps be better not to press M. de Montmorin upon the reports which prevail respecting an armament being order'd at Brest of twelve sail of the Line, for, if there be any dependance on the assurances he has already given such reports are without foundation: I mention'd to your Lordship that the Ships at Brest were in a prepar'd state, and this much M. de Montmorin allows, but he does

not allow that they are in a condition to put to sea nor *that any orders have been sent for their being equipp'd :* this appears to me to be so satisfactory that I submit to your Lordship whether it would be proper to press the matter further at present, and indeed whether it can be done without seeming to doubt the truth of very solemn assertions, which, at all times impolitic might be peculiarly so at this critical and important juncture.

Slater arriv'd early this Morning with your Lordship's Despatch No. 13. I had already assur'd M. de Montmorin that our present naval Armament was nothing more than a few Guard-Ships sent out for the purpose of manoeuvering which will in all probability be repeated every year.

42. Dorset to Carmarthen, 12 July 1787.

I had much conversation with Monsieur de Montmorin last Tuesday at Versailles on the present situation of Affairs in Holland, when that Minister express'd himself very openly with respect to His Most Christian Majesty's wishes as thereunto relating, and at the same time avowed the Application made by the City of Amsterdam to the States of Holland, in order to its' being referred to the States-General, that His Most Christian Majesty be prayed to interpose his good Offices for the purpose of putting an end to the troubles which prevail ; Some of the Provinces have already consented to the Proposal, and many others have taken it ad referendum Monsieur de Montmorin gave it very strongly as his opinion that other Powers could not reasonably take offence at the Court of Versailles in consequence of such a proceeding, no more than could the Court of Versailles, in case a similar application should be made to any other Foreign Power. I ventured to observe to him that Great Britain could not remain an indifferent Spectator during the Mediation of so powerful a Neighbour, on whose decision the fate of the other Provinces must depend, and that the only possible means of preventing the growth of Jealousies, seem to be that like Application should be made to His Britannic

Majesty to join His influence and good offices, towards the same salutary purpose.

He said *he made no doubt* that such an application would be made, in which case the Two Powers might jointly concert such measures as should appear best calculated to restore good-order, and tranquility, and I thought I could collect from Monsieur de Montmorin's manner that He expected the application would *shortly* be made.

His Most Christian Majesty's wishes are to see a degree of tranquility establish'd in Holland before any promise of support be held out to either Party, by any Foreign Power, but in the mean time to give assurances that no privileges shall be invaded 'till all circumstances shall have been fairly, and candidly discussed, and that whatever terms shall be resolv'd upon, and proposed as fair, and honorable for both Parties, they shall bind themselves to accept, and faithfully observe them.

They, only, who are upon the spot can tell, whether in the present inflamed state of Party Rage any abatement of it may be hoped for to open the way for further conciliation. The Minister denied that any steps had been taken to obtain the Vote of Mediation in favor of France ; that any propositions were authorized to be made as to a future plan for a new Government in Holland ; that the views of His Court were incompatible with the real interests of the Prince of Orange, or that France has any thoughts of objecting to the Mediation of other Powers. Had He thought proper to express this much in his Letter of Answer to me, it would have been more satisfactory, especially as I must suppose that his letter in exchange with Mr. Eden, does not speak quite so fully on the Subject. I must do him the justice to say that I do not suspect him of any intention to deceive me, nor have I the least reason to question the veracity of his professions, yet it is for Your Lordship to determine how far credit is to be given to *Verbal Assurances*, at any time retractable, in matters of so high importance.

He again gave me to understand that no preparations in their Navy, or Army were going on, but what I have already mentioned

to your Lordship ; He observed that we were arming more Ships, which I said I did not believe, as I had not heard of any further Equipment being intended on our part. Your Lordship, I trust, sees the necessity of giving me positive information on this point, since, in a Negociation such as the present, nothing can well advance, without a reciprocal Confidence. Your Lordship may perhaps think my Letter to Monsieur de Montmorin rather strong, yet I can assure You that there does not, nor is there likely to subsist any degree of Coolness in consequence of it, between us.

Prince Henry, Uncle to the King of Prussia, is expected here in the Autumn, and it is understood he purposes to pass the Winter at Paris.

I send Your Lordship a Pamphlet just published, the Work of Monsieur de Mirabeau ; You will observe a passage, which I have marked, mentioning in terms, pointedly disrespectfull, His Imperial Majesty. The real object of this Publication is supposed to be to induce The King of Prussia to lend Money to France, for it is a known fact that during Monsieur de Calonne's Administration, Monsieur de Mirabeau went to Berlin with that View, but the late King absolutely refused to listen to his proposals. The Comte de Mirabeau is at present at Brunswick.

43. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
12 July 1787.

On Friday last, the 6th., The Comte d'Artois, to the no small astonishment of His Majesty and His Ministers as well as of the Parliament, moved that the Parliament, having thought proper to oppose the registering of the Stamp-Act, should state their objections by a remonstrance to the King, upon which the inclos'd Arrêté was immediately mov'd and passed unanimously, and on Sunday last it was presented to the King at Versailles.

His Majesty after declaring His disapprobation of the proceedings of the Parliament is said to have given a positive refusal to their request that a state of the income and of the expenditure should be laid before them, as well as that of the reforms, Improvement of the Revenues, Economy. In consequence of this

non-compliance with the demand of the Parliament that Body met again on Monday, and a new deliberation took place on the King's answer. Several of the members spoke with great freedom and twelve of them were of opinion that the States-General ought to be assembled at a conjuncture so critical as the present ; Ten others were for inviting His Majesty to come Himself to His Parliament and to hear their deliberations.

It was afterwards agreed that fresh supplications should be made to the King to grant the request made in the Arrêté of the 6th.

Commissaries were appointed to meet on the following day (Tuesday). The Parliament assembled again this day and is now sitting to deliberate upon a second remonstrance to His Majesty, who seems determin'd not to give way to the difficulties raised by the Parliament ; it is therefore thought that His Majesty's answer will soon be followed by a *Lettre de Jussion*, and, should that also be rejected, that a *Lit de Justice* will certainly be held to enforce obedience.

This new Tax meets with great opposition amongst all degrees of commercial people who think it will create great inconveniences and very much impede the course of business, more especially as it is fear'd that the Duty is intended to include Stamp-receipts after the plan of the Receipt-Tax in England.

At Rouen particularly there is a great outcry against it, and violent threats are held out against those Officers who shall first be appointed to collect it.

On Monday last M. Robert de Vincent was very personal in his manner of expressing himself in Parliament in respect to M. de Calonne, and went so far as to say that it was a disgrace to the Nation that *un mauvais sujet* like him was suffer'd to go unpunish'd.

M. de Vermeranges, late *Sous Intendant des Postes*, is dismiss'd by the Duc de Polignac and a commission is appointed to examine his accounts during which it is said he will be imprison'd. It is thought that he impos'd very much on the facility of M. de Calonne and that he will be made accountable for some millions.

It is believ'd also that M. de Calonne took fright at the impeach-

ment of Monsr. de Vermeranges and on that account left the Kingdom. He wrote to His Majesty the day on which he went off, and is now at Rotterdam.

His Friends are much hurt at his precipitate flight conceiving that the World in general and particularly his enemies will consider it as an avowal of guilt ; but the severity with which he has been and is still treated added to the circumstance of his being depriv'd of the Insignia of the Order of the St. Esprit, might naturally alarm him and raise apprehensions for his personal safety tho' I am persuaded that His Majesty would not have permitted any prosecution to be commenc'd against him ; indeed those who are best acquainted with the real state of his circumstances are satisfied that however much he may have squander'd of the public money, he did not apply it to his own private emolument : but few men perhaps in his situation would have remain'd even so long in this Country where his Enemies are both numerous and powerfull and where the impeachment of an Ex-Minister is peculiarly terrific since he must on no account however necessary to his justification reveal the secrets of State.

44. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
19 July 1787.

Your Lordship having permitted, and even expressed a desire that Monsieur de Montmorin might have the perusal of your important Despatch No. 14 I did not hesitate to leave it in that Minister's hands, and I was informed by him last Tuesday, that the necessity of a faithful translation of it being made, before any answer could be given, had not allowed him to lay it before His Majesty and Council ; I can, however in the mean time assure Your Lordship that Monsieur de Montmorin expressed himself as being much pleased with the pacific, and conciliatory disposition that appears to prevail in the Cabinet of St. James's, which he considers as the more satisfactory, because it so perfectly coincides with the sentiments of His Most Christian Majesty's Servants.

A Council will sit this Evening, to take the matter into consider-

ation, and the result of their deliberations will be communicated to The Chargé d'Affaires, at London by a Courier who is to be dispatched from Versailles to-morrow, for that purpose : Monsieur de Montmorin has promised me a Copy of the Answer that will be transmitted to London.

He had already framed such an Answer as he conceives to be proper to the occasion, and which he proposes to lay before the Council, persuaded that it will not undergo any material alteration on the part of His Most Christian Majesty ; It is, so far as my Memory enables me to give Your Lordship the substance of it, to be expressed to the following effect.

"The strongest assurances to His Britannic Majesty of the earnest desire which His Most Christian Majesty has to re-establish Order and Authority in the United Provinces and of His wish to effect so desirable an event in conjunction with England, proposing a System of conduct for that purpose in the most candid, conciliatory language, and setting forth that, Party rage having made so great a progress, and being increased to so great a height, the only possible means now left of reducing the violence of it is to insist on a cessation of Hostilities on the part of Holland, with a positive injunction on that Province, as well as on the others, to draw all the Troops in their own Pay, within their own Jurisdiction : that England should use Her Interest to prevail with the Stadtholderian Party to do the like, and even insist on it, in case the proposal be not acceded to, upon milder terms : this much being effected on both Sides, the Mediation of England and France to be further employed in conjunction with Prussia if His Prussian Majesty's assistance shall be required :—that the intentions of His Most Christian Majesty are not to alter the Constitution of The Republic, but that the Sovereign Power should remain vested in the States-General, of which The Stadtholder should be regarded as the Chief Magistrate : that all the Subject points of dispute should be thoroughly investigated, and fairly discussed by the Mediating Powers, whose decisions thereon should be inviolably adhered to : That His Most Christian Majesty has certainly nothing so much at heart as the Continuance of the Peace of Europe, but that when-

ever Great Britain or any other Power shall arm, He will feel Himself under the necessity of doing the same ; that it is not his design to take the lead, but to follow the example which other Powers may give : That although England had put to sea, Six Ships of the Line, and had given orders for three more to be in readiness, He should order no more than Nine to be in readiness in Brest Harbour, but without sending them to Sea, and that by such Armaments, as the Armaments of Great Britain or any other Power must justify, His Most Christian Majesty did by no means intend that it should be understood by Europe in general, that He is hostilely inclined. That His Most Christian Majesty sincerely hopes that during the arrangement of this delicate business, the present object of attention, nothing will arise to interrupt the Harmony which at present happily subsists between the two Countries."

Such, to the best of my Recollection, My Lord, is the general tenor of the Answer, as intimated to me by Monsieur de Montmorin to be communicated from this Court, and such are the present points, therein to be suggested.

I must beg leave to observe to Your Lordship that your Despatch having mention'd only Six Ships, I could neither allow, nor confute the assertion of three more Ships being added for Service : I must therefore repeat to Your Lordship, that it is essentially proper that I should be properly furnished with the most accurate information respecting any Armaments that may be judg'd necessary, all which are very soon known here, since it is exceedingly distressing to me to be told by the Minister of such measures, as for want of proper Authority I am obliged to hear of from him, without the power of replying thereto. Monsieur de Montmorin hinted to me that he thought in case the Two Courts should come to a good understanding, Paris would be the most convenient Place for carrying on the Negociation, but that at all events it would be highly improper to assemble near to the Country in which the troubles actually exist.

45. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
19 July 1787.

I enclose to your Lordship the several proceedings of the Parliament which become every day more and more interesting: at the last meeting on Monday a very extraordinary division took place: *sixty-three* of the members having voted for another remonstrance to the King against the Stamp-Tax and *sixty* for *des Etats Généraux du Royaume* which latter question would have been carried had not the Princes of the Blood been present: however in that case the Parliament certainly would have met with a flat refusal.

This spirit of opposition which gains ground very rapidly is a matter of great inquietude to the Archbishop of Toulouse who wishes to avoid to the last the necessity of advising a *Lit de Justice.*

The other Parliaments will, it is thought, follow the example set them by that of Paris: Those of Rouen and Bordeaux have already gone so far as to intimate doubts whether they will suffer the proposition of the Stamp-Tax to be laid before them.

Your Lordship receives herewith the King's answer dated the 8th of July to the first remonstrance of the Parliament: also the second remonstrance of that Body in consequence, and likewise the King's last answer dated the 15th.

A Committee has been appointed and sits every day to frame another remonstrance and to report the result of last Monday's Debate of which nothing has hitherto been made public.

Messrs. Robert de St. Vincent and Duval d'Epresmenil[1] have render'd themselves very conspicuous by the warmth with which they support the interests of what they now style here, in the language of England, the side of opposition. The former of these two persons attacks without reserve the administration of M. de Calonne, and, when he was called upon to give his opinion respecting the Stamp-Tax, said that none but such a *monster* as M. de Calonne could ever have conceiv'd the idea of such a Tax.

Another Counsellor, whose name is not mention'd, made use of

[1] Jean Jacques Duval d'Eprémesnil 1746-1794, guillotined.

expressions on the same occasion of a menacing tendency, and which were consider'd not only as very improper but also highly indecent: the Minister, he observ'd, ought not to have so soon forgot that it was a Stamp Act which occasion'd America to shake off the Yoke of the Mother Country. In short the fomentation is arriv'd at a high pitch and in private Societies the Members of the Parliament do not scruple to declare that they will undergo any severity rather than submit to register the Stamp-Tax. They further add that if the King should compel them to it by holding a *Lit de Justice*, the utmost stretch of His authority, they would, as soon as His Majesty retir'd, protest against the Edict.

It is likewise said that the King is firmly resolv'd not to give in a State of the Receipt and expences, nor that of the propos'd retrenchments and improvements, it being alledg'd that such sort of communication however due to the States-General or to a Parliament such as that of England, is incompatible with the majesty of the Throne of a State purely monarchical..... I send your Lordship the first part that is publish'd of the proceedings in the Assembly of Notables.

46. Dorset to Carmarthen, 19 July 1787.

The following Précis of Monsr. de Vermeranges' business was left at the Salon for the inspection of the Club.

" Le Gouvernement ayant jugé qu'il etoit convenable à l'approche a l'Assemblée des Notables de faire quelques efforts pour soutenir le crédit de la place en les appliquant aux effets sur lesquels la majeure partie des fonds des Capitalistes se trouvant engagée, et dont la Caisse auroit conséquemment une influence plus sensible, afin qu'au moment ou l'on découvriroit la playe de l'Etat, toute l'Europe fut frappée de l'idée que si les finances du Royaume éprouvoient de l'embarras, il existoit des moyens si sûrs de les faire cesser, que même la connoissance de ces embarras ne produisoit aucune sensation facheuse sur les négociations de la place ; M. de Vermeranges a été choisi pour assurer le secret de cette opération, en reçevant les fonds qu'on y avoit destinés et les trans-

mittant de suite à ceux qui devoient en faire l'emploi et en rendre compte au Ministre. Il prouve par les piéces qu'il produit qu'il a rempli litteralement la mission de confiance dont il a été chargé."

There seems, however, to exist no doubt but that the enormous sum of 22 millions of livres, which were issued from the Trésor Royal by order of the Comptrolleur Général to his agent M. de Vermeranges, was employed not in the support of the Effets Royaux, but in speculations of the Government in the shares of the E. India Company, *les eaux de Paris* &c.—Eleven millions of the twenty-two have been reimbursed to the Treasury, and the rest as yet remains unaccounted for.

No successor is nam'd to M. de Vermeranges in the Post Office; It is said that place is to be suppress'd: that Gentleman remains at Paris and has always enjoy'd his liberty, tho' it was given out by his enemies some time ago that he had been arrested.

47. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
26 July 1787.

His Majesty having been made fully acquainted with the sentiments of this Court on the present critical situation of affairs in Holland by the Letter transmitted to your Lordship from Mons. de Montmorin, together with His Most Christian Majesty's Declaration to the United Provinces, I have not anything material to communicate to Your Lordship this day relative to the subject.

Several complaints having been made to me lately by English Merchants trading to the Ports of this Kingdom since the Treaty of Commerce has taken place, I think it necessary to inform Your Lordship that I receive the strongest assurances from Monsr. de Montmorin, in the name of this Government, that, altho' some individuals may at present suffer temporary inconvenience on account of the delays they experience in the admission of their goods, the difficulties, which have arisen altogether from the ignorance of the Custom-House Officers, will be remov'd as soon as possible and that there does not exist the smallest intention of throwing any obstacles in the way to prevent the commercial intercourse between the two Countries from having its full scope: and I am promis'd

that all due attention shall be immediately given to the grievances that have already been complain'd of.

Indeed from the positive and repeated declarations of the Minister and also of M. de Rayneval, whenever the subject is mention'd, I cannot doubt the sincerity of their assurances however much cause for alarm they may find at the discontents which prevail in many of the Provinces, as appears from the very strong Memorials that have been sent by them against the Treaty of Commerce with Great Britain, and particularly in Normandy where it is said that no less than twenty-five thousand workmen are depriv'd of employment by the great importation of Manchester Goods of all kinds by which the Manufactories in the Town of Rouen suffer very material detriment.

The Parliament still continues to give great uneasiness to His Majesty's Servants by its persevering opposition to the *Timbre* against which a third remonstrance was voted last Tuesday. It is to be presented this day, and I am sorry it is not in my power to send your Lordship a Copy of it, none having yet been distributed. It is suppos'd that His Majesty's answer will be much to the same effect as the last, and as that Body cannot remonstrate more than three times upon the same matter, that it will be followed by a *Lettre de Jussion* (a command) the previous and leading step to a *Lit de Justice*. Some are of opinion that no direct answer will be given to this remonstrance, but that the Edict will be suffer'd to remain without being register'd 'till towards the end of the Autumn, there being a sufficiency of money in the Treasury to answer the purposes of Government 'till that time ; fresh and more positive orders must then be sent to Parliament.

Others are of opinion that such procrastination might be dangerous and that the Minister thinks it best not to wait 'till the last moment to enforce the commands of the Sovereign.

Monsr. de Calonne was again much censur'd particularly on account of the Edicts for the establishment of the new E. India Company, and the *Agiotage* (Stock Jobbing) which latter his enemies say has brought disgrace on the Government and the Nation : it is expected by some people that this Ex-Minister (who is still suppos'd

to be in Holland) will be impeach'd for having advis'd His Majesty to adopt two such impolitic and destructive measures ; but it is not likely that any formal and legal enquiry into his conduct will be permitted, as the policy of this Country does not allow that any proceedings should be sifted where the Government is in danger of being reflected upon thereby.

It is said that the Maréchal de Castries wishes to resign but the present unsettled state of Affairs renders the event less likely to take place than it was some months ago.

48. Dorset to Carmarthen, 2 August 1787.

I communicated to Monsr. de Montmorin last Tuesday the contents of Your Lordship's Despatch No. 16 which I had receiv'd the previous evening ; I left in that Minister's hands a copy of it, which will be laid before His Majesty in Council this evening. M. de Montmorin had already sent me a copy of his last Letter to M. de Barthelemy and has promised me a copy next Friday of the answer which will be dispatch'd on that day to M. de Barthelemy conveying to the King the sentiments of His Most Christian Majesty.

In the meantime I am authoriz'd to assure your Lordship that there is no intention whatever to carry on any further Armaments in the Ports of this Country, but that His Most Christian Majesty means strictly *à la lettre* to keep pace with us and not to put to Sea or equip a single Ship more than what we shall think proper to do.

In regard to the Cantonment at Givet he said that they could not alter that destination of their Troops, especially at this moment since His Prussian Majesty had thought proper to order a Body of Force, consisting of twenty-thousand men to march through the Duchy of Cleves to Wesel and there to remain : I did not understand that M. de Montmorin meant to imply that any fresh orders had been given in consequence of this intelligence : he only observ'd to me that it might give a bad impression were His Most Christian Majesty to desist from a project (which had been judg'd

expedient) merely because another Potentate had found reason for adopting a similar one. No fresh orders have however been sent to Givet, nor do I believe that any further direction will be given unless some new circumstances shall arise to point out the necessity of forming a Cantonment there.

I cannot pretend to say precisely what answer will be return'd to the several points mention'd in your Lordship's last Despatch, nor indeed could M. de Montmorin, as he himself observ'd to me, speak out upon that matter, without having first duly consider'd them; but I am persuaded that whatever may be the sentiments convey'd in his next Despatch, they will not differ from those of His Majesty so materially as to endanger a continuance of the friendship and harmony which at present subsist between the two Courts. The determination of the States respecting the acceptance of the mediation of France is expected with much impatience: That any disagreeable consequences should follow the rejection of this mediation I can scarcely conceive, when I consider the pacific language uniformly and explicitly held by the Minister; but I trust that this will with other points be fully and unequivocally explain'd to His Majesty's satisfaction in M. de Montmorin's next Letter which probably will be communicated to your Lordship by Monsr. de Barthélemy on Monday next or Tuesday at furthest.

49. Dorset to Carmarthen, 2 August 1787.

The embarrassment occasion'd by the proceedings of the Parliament still continues very great. I send your Lordship the last Remonstrance of that Body which was presented the 26th Ult. at Versailles: I enclose also His Majesty's answers communicated, the one on the following day the other on the 29th together with the *Arrête du Parlement* which was voted by a majority of seventy to forty-two on Monday last and which is to be presented at Versailles this day by a Deputation of twenty-two Members who are appointed to wait upon His Majesty for that purpose.

At the Meeting of the Parliament last Monday, the Princes and Peers being present, it was resolv'd to persist in the refusal of

registering the Stamp Act, as well as another Edict for raising the Land-Tax by tenths instead of two twentieths ; it was at the same time agreed to recommend to His Majesty the propriety of calling together *les États Généraux* in order to their deciding the expediency of raising new Taxes ; sufficient proof not having been shewn that such additional burthens upon the people are absolutely necessary.

The curiosity of the public is much rais'd by this determin'd resistance of the Parliament ; and those who are attach'd to the Court are not without dread of the consequences that may ensue from the example which the Parliament of Paris is giving to the rest of the Kingdom. There is however no doubt that His Majesty's commands must finally be complied with ; tho' it is possible that recourse must be had to the disagreeable extremity of holding a *Lit de Justice* for the purpose. It is certain that the assembling *les États Généraux* will not be agreed to, since the King is, constitutionally speaking, the only competent Judge of such an important measure, while it is beyond the province of the Parliament (which in fact is little more in this Country than a Court of Justice) to interfere and take upon itself to recommend the Assembling the real and only representatives of the Nation.

Besides it is no secret that His Majesty experienc'd so much trouble and vexation from the Assembly of Notables that it is not probable He will be induc'd to consent to a measure which is evidently so formidable to his own authority. The Abbé de Coigneux accus'd M. de Calonne publicly last Monday of having scandalously administer'd the public money ; but I do not understand that the accusation amounts to what we term an Impeachment or whether it will be followed by further enquiry. The same Person has declar'd his intention of making a motion next Saturday to prove that the establishment of the East India Company (which was form'd under the administration of M. de Calonne) is ruinous in itself and destructive to the interests of the Nation.

The Meeting of the Parliament of the 24 Ult : was preceded by a Committee wherein it was decided that the Guards of Monsieur and the Comte d'Artois attending those Princes shall take rank of

all other military Corps : it was likewise determin'd that the Parliament neither ought nor should in future have any other guard that their *Huissiers* and that the people of the short Robe were, properly speaking, but the Sheriff's Officers whose duty ought to be confin'd to the charge of criminals. The King gave orders also that MONSIEUR, whenever He attended the Parliament, should have, in addition to His establish'd Guard, a Guard of honour composed of one hundred of the Swiss Guards and one hundred of the French.

The Archbishop of Toulouse, whose object certainly is to become first Minister, has been hitherto too much occupied with a variety of urgent and intricate business to find leisure for prosecuting that design : besides which the Comptrolleur General (M. de Villedeuil), who thinks His Grace interferes too much with his Authority, has already begun to throw obstacles in his way. The rest of the Cabinet go on very quietly in their respective Departments.

It is much to be wish'd by those who have frequent occasions of transacting business with M. de Montmorin that that Minister was of a disposition to put himself a little more forward : His abilities and integrity would do honour to His King and his Country as well as to himself, and there is no doubt of his possessing powers with which he might acquire an equal degree of consideration with the late Monsr. de Vergennes. It is not easily to be accounted for but certain it is that Affairs have gone on in the greatest confusion since the death of that Minister.

I acquainted M. de Montmorin with my having more grievances to lay before him on the part of the Tobago Merchants, but I told him that I understood a Gentleman, Mr. Jacob Wilkinson, was coming over very soon expressly upon that business, we therefore agreed it might be better to wait his arrival.

50. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
5 August 1787.

...The circumstance of the King of Prussia's having order'd a Body of twenty thousand men to be in readiness to march has greatly alarmed this Court and may possibly be attended with very

serious consequences as it seems likely to be decided by the Cabinet here to send a Force fully equal to that propos'd by His Prussian Majesty, tho' I am assur'd that no hostile intention towards England is to be understood by such a measure.

The repeated refusals of the Parliament to register the *Timbre* and the *Impôt Territorial* have decided His Majesty to hold a Bed of Justice to which the Parliament is accordingly summon'd for to-morrow.

People's minds are at this moment very much heated in this Country ; and there is no doubt that a measure of this nature will diffuse a spirit of opposition through the Provinces, and, of course, most of the Provincial Parliaments, of which those of Bordeaux and Rouen are the most dispos'd to violence, will follow the example of that of Paris which will necessarily be productive of much trouble and embarrassment to Government.

M. de Montmorin will in the course of the ensuing week send a full reply to your Lordship's Despatch to me No. 16 (see no. 122). To-morrow a Messenger will be dispatch'd from Versailles with instructions to M. de Barthelemy to notify to His Majesty the intentions of the Most Christian King in consequence of the intelligence that has been receiv'd respecting the armaments of His Prussian Majesty.

51. Dorset to Carmarthen, 9 August 1787.

I had the honor of Informing your Lordship in my Despatch of last Sunday that His Most Christian Majesty had decided upon holding a Bed of Justice on the following day at Versailles.

This step, I understand, occasion'd much deliberation from the variety of opinions which prevail'd in the Council, and M. de Malesherbes, in particular, is said to have given in a Memorial containing very strong reasons against the measure : they were however, over-ruled and the Parliament, after having protested in the usual form against the place (Versailles) to which they were conven'd, were on Monday at eleven o'Clock receiv'd by His Majesty seated on his Throne and attended by the principal

Officers of State. The King expressed in a few words, but in very strong terms His disapprobation of the conduct of His Parliament and gave it in express command that they should proceed upon the spot to the registring of His declaration *sur le Timbre* and also of His Edict concerning the *Subvention Territoriale*. The Subvention Territoriale is intended to be a more rigorous collection of the two subsisting *Vingtièmes* or Land-Tax.

The opposition of the Parliament to this mode of levying the Tax proceeds from the express agreement made by the Sovereign when the second Vingtième was laid on in 1748, that it should be collected in the same manner as the first, that is to say, with the same degree of lenity and exemption.

The King was followed in His Speech by the Garde des Sceaux to whom it is usually left to enter more fully into the Sovereign's intentions and to explain his will and pleasure.

The first President then, in the name of the whole Body, read a speech of considerable length and much energy, to the same purport, tho' in different terms, as the several remonstrances which had been presented before the Bed of Justice took place. The Avocat Général (M. de Seguier) also made a short discourse seconding the opinions of the first President.

On Tuesday (Toutes les Chambres assemblées) a deliberation took place which lasted eight hours and it was resolved by a majority of 64 to 51 that the proceeding of Monday was *nul, illégal et non avenu.*

I send your Lordship the *Arrête du Parlement* of Sunday the 5th Inst.

52. Private Letter from Dorset to Carmarthen, Dover, Tuesday night 14 August 1787.

I landed this day from Boulogne but I cannot possibly arrive in time for the Levee to morrow, and as I think you may wish to lay before His Majesty the proceedings of the Parliament of Paris as soon as possible, I send them this night by express; the enclosed note contains the resolutions that Body made the day after the Bed of Justice was held (last Monday se'ennight) at Versailles,

that of the 10th is the impeachment of M. de Calonne which is meant to be carried on. I also send your Lordship the two Edicts which were register'd by the King *au lit de Justice*, and which were only published last Friday and were very difficult to be had. I shall be in town to morrow night or Thursday morning, your Lordship may hear of me at Lord Thanet's but I will take care and send to you as soon as I arrive. I had a very short passage but I have since been amazingly sick which occasions this short and hasty scrawl.

I have a great deal to say and am particularly commissioned to repeat the assurances already given of the pacific disposition of his Most Christian Majesty.

53. PRIVATE LETTER FROM DORSET TO CARMARTHEN, Dover, 15 August 1787.

I forgot yesterday to mention to you *les Réformes* which are immediately to take place at Versailles. It was very stupid of me to omit sending this account to you last night, but the sea sickness render'd me almost incapable of writing anything. I shall be in town early to morrow morning.

54. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN. 16 August 1787.

...The Parliament of Paris, and indeed all the other Parliaments of the Kingdom, continue to be animated by the same spirit of opposition to the measures of the Court that has manifested itself in so uncommon a degree ever since the dissolution of the Assembly of Notables. The protection of the people from an encrease of Taxes is the ground.... that has been artfully chosen by the Parliament on which to rest their disobedience ; but, I have reason to think that the establishment of the Provincial Assemblies throughout the Kingdom (a measure which could not be opposed by them in an open manner, on account of its extreme popularity) is the real, tho' concealed motive of their conduct. That innovation, which however it may be lightly treated with respect to its consequences to the Constitution of the French Monarchy by some

individuals, seems, in general, to be allowed to be a change of great prospective importance. But, if, as it is imagined, these establishments should in future conduce to the limitation of the Authority of the Sovereign, there can be no doubt but that they will affect in a more near and more immediate manner the Consideration of those Courts whose existence is almost coeval with the Monarchy itself. The Provincial Assemblies becoming hereafter the judges and regulators of every part of the administration that immediately affects the people, and of which they are to form so considerable a part, nothing can in future be effectually opposed by the Parliaments, as their sanction can never be withheld from such measures as may already have been adopted, and agreed to by the Nation at large.

The present struggle may therefore, I apprehend, be regarded as the last gasp of these Sovereign Courts consider'd in the light of checks upon the power of the Crown, should the States General, so loudly called for by them, not be convened; and there will remain, of course, nothing of their so long maintained consideration with the public, but the simple formality of registration and the ordinary dispensation of Justice. In such a state of their Affairs, Your Lordship will not be surprised to learn that their protest against their own constrained Act at the Lit de Justice should have been followed by a formal interdiction of the printing and distribution of the Declaration of the Stamp Duty, and the Edict for the Land Tax.

So steady a resistance to the court could not fail of bringing matters very soon to a crisis, and in consequence of this last step, it was resolved in Council, on Tuesday, to transfer the Parliament to Troyes in Champagne :—The word *transférer* and not *exiler* is made use of on this occasion, and the Lettres de Cachet which were delivered to the different Members between 3 and 4 o'Clock Yesterday Morning, contain an order to repair immediately to the place above mentioned, and there to wait the King's Orders.

In consequence of accounts very lately received from Bordeaux of the same refractory nature, I understand that an Order has been sent to exile the Parliament of that City : I am not certain to what place, but it is generally said to be Libousne (?).

Under these embarrassing circumstances, the Court has the additional mortification of seeing that a List of Retrenchments, under the title of Réglement, which it thought proper to publish a Few days ago, has not produced the desired effect, either with the Parliament or the public: the slowness with which the step was taken seemed indeed to carry with it the appearance of extreme reluctance, and those who in other respects may be inclined to think well of it, blame very much the injudicious choice of the moment in which it was resorted to.

The suppression of the very high and expensive place of Master of the Horse or Premier Ecuyer, enjoyed so long by the Duc de Coigny [1] a Nobleman in great favor has been sounded very highly in the Ear of the public; but it seems however to be believed that some compensation, tho' not of equal patronage and command, will be given to him.

55. Hailes to Carmarthen, 23 August 1787.

On the 17th Instant the King's Brothers, Monsieur and the Comte d'Artois, went in State to the Chambre des Comptes and the Cour des Aides, to be present at the execution of His Majesty's Commands for the enregistering the Declaration of the Stamp Duty and the Edict for the Land Tax. Monsieur, in going to the Chambre des Comptes, was received by the people with the loudest acclamations: but the greatest and most indecent marks of dissatisfaction were shown to the Comte d'Artois, as he proceeded to the Cour des Aides. The populace went so far as to endeavor to force a passage into the Court in a very tumultuary manner, and it was not without the assistance of the guards that they were repulsed and quieted. Four or five persons are said to have been much wounded in the disturbance. The Magistrates, on their return from their Courts, were applauded in an uncommon manner for the firmness of their conduct in protesting (as they did immediately) against the transcription of the Edict and Declaration on their Registers; and for having unanimously resolved to petition

[1] Marie François Henri de Franquets Duc de Coigny (1736-1821).

His Majesty to restore to the City and to the Justice of the Country those Magistrates whose conduct they conceived to have been dictated by the purest motives of patriotism and by the truest attachment to the interests of their Sovereign, considered by them, at all times, as inseparable from those of His people. Several spies of the police who were on the spot on this occasion to watch the behavior of the people, were very severely treated: amongst the rest an officer of some rank, retired from the service, and known to exercise that invidious employment, was so roughly handled as to be thought, at this time, past all hopes of recovery. The Edict and Declaration were burnt by the Mob before the Palais: and a person belonging to the Household of the Comte d'Artois, was, a few days since, treated with the last indignity and so much violence, as to be obliged to take refuge in a convent, for no other reason than his being in the service of that prince.

These excesses of the populace have made it necessary for the Government to double the Guards in Paris:—Patrols of the French and Swiss Regiments have for some days past been set in the different quarters of the City. But the apprehensions of Government do not appear to be confined to the populace alone; an order having been issued from the police for the suppression of all Societies under the denomination of Clubs &c. This Act of vigour which is excused by the Baron de Breteuil on account of the licentious conversation reported to have been held in these meetings against the Sovereigns and their Ministers, has not produced, nor is it indeed likely to produce, any other effect than that of increasing the discontent of a very considerable number of people of rank and consequence:—At all events, it carried with it a great appearance of alarm and distrust.

There does not, at present, appear to be any likelihood of the Parliament's giving way in this contest with the Court. Nor is it at all easy to see where a door could be opened to conciliation. All the springs of intrigue will, doubtless, be set in motion, in order to divide and influence the different members of so refractory a Body; and it is to be presumed that no occasion will be lost to prejudice them as much as possible in the eyes of the public. An

Instance of it has already been observable: a considerable run which there was, on Tuesday, on the Caisse d'Escompte was attributed to a malicious combination and intention of the Parliament to overturn that establishment.—Much, therefore, of course, will depend upon that unanimity of energy which has, since the beginning, characterized the whole of their proceedings.

On the other hand, the known and natural aversion of the King to the idea of a convocation of the States General (a measure deemed so expedient at this time) makes it to all appearance equally improbable that the affairs of the kingdom should be brought to a settlement by the means of another National Assembly.—However, the opinion of its probability, founded on necessity, certainly does gain ground, and the best informed are inclined to think that the disorders of the Kingdom are too excessive to be remedied by any set of Ministers, be their abilities what they may.

Accounts were yesterday said to have been received from Rouen, that the Parliament of that City, having refused to register the Edict for the Land Tax, had been surrounded by the Mob, and had been threaten'd that their Houses would be set on fire, if they did not immediately execute the Kings Orders. It is imagin'd, in that part, that the opposition of the Parliament to the new form of Taxation, proceeds entirely from their apprehension of losing that exemption, which they at present enjoy, by the mode of collecting the Vingtièmes.

The Officers who are to command in the Cantonments at Givet (to consist as I now understand of 25,000 men) have received orders to get themselves in readiness to proceed to that place.

56. Hailes to Carmarthen, 28 August 1787.

On Sunday Evening the Archbishop of Toulouse was declared by His Most Christian Majesty in Council, His Principal Minister. The Title of 'Premier Ministre' is not given to him on account (as it is supposed) of its' inducing the necessity of the King's Letters Patent, declaratory of that particular character, and which are always enregister'd by the Parliament.

It seems to be understood that the Archbishop's authority will not be in any shape bounded by this distinction, but that he will become Master of all the different Departments of Government.

I am assured that the Maréchal de Castries will shortly resign,— and that a Committee or Board will be form'd for the Execution of his Office, consisting of Monsr. de la Touche, the actual first Secretary, M. de Maltonette, and M. de la Poche together with three Officers of Rank in the Navy. The Plan of this Board, I am told, is to be taken from that of our Admiralty: but to be subject to the control of the first Minister.

Like expectations exist with respect to the Maréchal de Segur; but I am, as yet, entirely ignorant of the nature of the reform that is intended to be made in the War Department: it is, however, presumable that some person, or persons, entirely devoted to the Archbishop will be placed in his Room. M. de la Borde, it is said, will be made Directeur du Trésor Royal; some other new regulations and appointments are mentioned; but as yet they require confirmation.

A few days since M. de St. Priest, formerly Ambassador at Constantinople, and mentioned, at the death of M. de Vergennes, as a probable person to succeed him, was sent for express from the Country; and I now learn, with certainty, that he is appointed to the Dutch Embassy in the Room of M. de Verac who is to be recalled.

The Parliament of Paris has lately published an Arrête or Resolution, by which it is declared that the Letters Patent, judg'd necessary for the Government (tho' not so by that Body) for authenticating their judicial proceedings at Troyes, are duly enregistered. This order has been complied with to prevent any notions in the public that the parliament intended to obstruct the ordinary Course of Justice. Their former protests are however renewed at the commencement of this Resolution, and the Princes and Peers are invited to Troyes to continue their deliberations.

There has been for some days past, a very great run upon the Caisse d'Escompte but since the Deputation which it was found necessary to send to Versailles, and to which a satisfactory answer

is said to have been given by the Minister, the alarm of the public has very much abated. There does not exist, at this moment, any apprehension about the Solvability of that Establishment, but, had the Draughts continued to such an amount as of late, it must necessarily have desisted from its function of Discounting, and consequently many Commercial Houses would have fail'd for want of that accustomed and, now indeed, indispensable assistance.

I do not find that the Accounts said to have been received from Rouen (and mentioned in my last Despatch to your Lordship) of Violence having been threaten'd to the Parliament in case of their refusal to enregister the Edict for the Land Tax, have been confirmed :—some grounds for the report are yet thought to exist, and the people of that city are favorably inclined to the subvention in its present form.

Protests, to nearly the same effect, continue to be sent up to Versailles by the different Parliaments both against the Edict and Declaration, and also against the transferring that of Paris to Troyes.

The precautions taken by the Baron de Breteuil for the security of this City against riots have had an extremely good effect hitherto, and no apprehensions are at present entertained of any fresh disturbance of the public tranquillity.

57. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
30 August 1787.

The elevation of the Archbishop of Toulouse to the supreme place in the Councils of His Most Christian Majesty has been followed by the resignations (as was expected) of the Marshals de Ségur and de Castries of their several Departments. Other changes are said to be on the point of taking place, but I cannot, as yet, speak with any certainty concerning them. It will require, of course, some time to form any judgment of the plan of administration of the Archbishop if he really has formed any ; and your Lordship will easily conceive that being unfetter'd, as he now is, and without any apprehension of opposition from the Ministers of the different Departments, (who will do business with the King

only in his presence, or after he shall have prepared and disposed every thing for the Royal Revision and Assent), his conduct will wear an appearance of more uniformity than it has hitherto done:— during the short time he has been in Office, we have seen extraordinary contradictions, and in the same affairs, an act of Authority has, more than once, been coupled with a measure of weakness and concession. The Parliament was transferred to Troyes for having rejected the Declaration and the Edict, and yet the Chambre des Comptes and the Cour des Aides, whose conduct was exactly conformable to that of the other Sovereign Courts, are suffered to remain unmolested. Many conjectures are formed about the manner in which the Archbishop will proceed in his Affairs with the Parliaments. It has been said that M. de Barentin,[1] first President of the Cour des Aides, a person of conciliatory manners, is to be sent to Troyes to announce the withdrawing of the Edict, and Declaration, to restore the Parliament to its usual residence, to order the immediate Registration of an Edict for raising eighty Millions of Livres by Annuities : and to promise the convocation of the States-General in the course of three years. In the mean time, your Lordship will perceive by the inclos'd Arrêté or Resolution of the 27th Inst. at Troyes, that there is as yet no appearance whatever of a reconciliation between the Court and the Parliament.

A still stronger resolution is said to have been sent up from the Parliament of Grenoble to Versailles, and the same spirit of resistance is conspicuous in the conduct of all those who have remonstrated.

It was strongly reported, last night, that a Courier was arrived from Vienna with an Account of His Imperial Majesty's having confirmed to His Subjects in the Low Countries, by His Ultimatum, the full enjoyment of their Privileges, as guaranteed by the *Pacte inaugural* : of his having withdrawn his Intendants, and of his having restored to their Rights, All those Religious Houses and Establishments, the suppression and dispersion of which should not have been completed.

P.S. I have just learnt that Monsr. de Villedeuil the Comp-

[1] Charles Louis François de Barentin (1738-1819).

trolleur Général has resigned his place, and that Monsr. de Lambert, Counsellor of State, has succeeded him.

58. Hailes to Carmarthen, 2 Sept. 1787.

Lauzun the Messenger has informed me, that, on his return from his last journey to Calais, he learnt from two different people, that numbers of Artillery men, drafted, as is supposed, from the Garrisons in Flanders, had been observed, of late, to pass in the disguise of Peasants and Labourers, into the Bishoprick of Liege, and from thence to Maestricht and the nearest Towns of the Dutch Frontier. These Men were seen in small parties from five to ten persons, and without any Arms or Baggage.

Altho' it is probable that your Lordship will have received more full information of this Circumstance, I am happy to be able to avail myself of Mr. Gibert's return to England, and to communicate it to you as early as it was possible.

As yet there is no person named by the King to the War Department in the room of the Marechal de Ségur, several Circumstances however concur to make it probable that M. de Brienne, Brother to the Archbishop of Toulouse, and now commanding at Bordeaux, will succeed to it.

M. de la Borde has refused the place of *Directeur du Trésor Royal.*

I have been assured that the character of Minister Plenipotentiary has been, or will immediately be given to M. de Barthelemy, and that he will have full powers to act in it during the absence of the Ambassador.

P.S. I inclose printed Copies of the Resolution of the Parliament of Paris and of Rennes : also of that of the Cour des Aides and of the King's Answer. The vigilance of the Police in seizing and preventing the circulation of the Resolutions of the different Parliaments is so great, that it is with much difficulty that they can be obtained. All those that have been sent up to Versailles are nearly to the same effect, tho' in a style more or less declamatory.

59. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
4 Sept. 1787.

...The Ambassadors and Foreign Ministers, after having paid their Court to Their Majesties and the rest of the Royal Family, went this day to the Archbishop of Toulouse in a body, and in the same manner as was practised in the time of M. de Maurepas.

The hostile declarations of the Porte against the Empress of Russia are the occasion of much political conjecture and speculation.

60. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
6 Sept. 1784.

Although, in the present very urgent situation of affairs here, it might be expected that every day would produce some new Act of the Royal Authority, and that the Archbishop of Toulouse, now become, in a manner, the master of the State, would press forward his changes and reforms with a degree of rapidity, incompatible, certainly, with the late divided administration, but, both natural and necessary for an absolute one, under such circumstances, certain it is, that since his advancement, no step has been taken that can give us room to believe that any plan had been prepared by him, before he attained to it.

The Reduction of the Pensions, a measure full of difficulty and danger, it was expected would have been declared before he was raised to the dignity of Principal Minister ; but assail'd and importun'd, as he no doubt is, on all sides, on that account, it is not surprising that the operation should be retarded. The correction of abuses in the various Departments of Government, has been long thought necessary and just ; but the resumption of any part of what has been formally granted, under the sanction of Royal Authority certainly carries with it the impression of hardship and injustice, and is, indeed, to speak plainly (however urgent the necessity that may be pleaded on such an occasion,) to all intents and purposes, an act of Bankruptcy.

It is said that the suppression of the Chambre des Comptes, or

rather the uniting that Sovereign Court, as ancient as the Monarchy itself, with the Cour des Aides, is now in contemplation :—whatever other difficulties such an innovation may meet with, there can, I apprehend, be none greater than the necessity it will occasion of reimbursing above a Million Sterling : that Sum being, I am told, the value of the various Offices and employments held under that Tribunal.

It is not easy to foresee what will be the fate of the Land-Tax, but it seems to be generally the opinion that the Declaration for the Stamp Duty will either be withdrawn, or modified in such a shape, as to make it more palatable to the public in general, and to Commercial people in particular.

61. Hailes to Carmarthen, 11 Sept. 1787.

The Despatches from the French Ambassador at Constantinople to this Court, at the same time that they confirm the account of the Declaration of War by the Turks against Russia, and the imprisonment of M. de Bulkakow the Empress's Minister, are said, (and I fear with great truth) to convey very unfavorable impressions of the Conduct of Sir Robert Ainslie.[1] I am assured that M. de Choiseul Gouffier, in consequence of the information given him by the Reis Effendi, charges directly our Ambassador with not only having fomented, but advised the Rupture between the two powers ; and that after having effected his purpose in fixing the Turkish Minister in such hostile resolutions, that he offered his services (in what manner I know not) to M. de Bulkakow himself. Many private letters concur in imputing to Sir Robert the violent measures adopted by the porte; amongst the rest, one from Madame de St. Priest's father the Minister from Naples to Constantinople, is, I learn, very full and very direct in its accusation.

In consequence of this late intelligence a Courier has been despatch'd to Petersbourg with orders to M. de Ségur not to quit his post : what farther instructions have been sent to him I know not.

[1] English Ambassador at Constantinople.

This morning the Duke de Coigny return'd thanks to Their Majesties for the Dignity of the Peerage of France to which they have been pleased to raise him.

62. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
13 Sept. 1787.

I conceive that it may not be immaterial to inform your Lordship, that M. de Choiseul Gouffier's last Despatches (or at least so much of them as related to the part taken by Sir Robert Ainslie in bringing about the Declaration of War by the Porte against Russia) were communicated to M. de Simolin here, immediately after the receipt of them : the unfavorable impression, therefore, that was intended to be conveyed to that Minister's Court of the conduct of the British Ambassador, cannot I conclude, be doubted. The language that M. de Simolin holds, in common with many others upon this occasion, is, that it is to be presumed that Sir Robert Ainslie has acted without instructions.

The Government of Flanders, lately vacant by the Death of the Maréchal de Soubise, is given, I understand, to the Ml. de Castries; and Thirty Thousand Livres per Annum are added to the appointments of the Maréchal de Ségur, as ancient Minister, and are to be enjoy'd by him until he shall have also been provided with a Government.

I do not venture to trouble your Lordship with any detail of what passes here, at this time, being in the persuasion that you will receive the fullest and most correct information, of every kind, from Mr. Eden's Despatches.

63. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
16 Sept. 1787.

On Friday last, M. de Brienne, Brother of the Archbishop of Toulouse, was declared Minister of the War Department in the room of Maréchal de Ségur.

In consequence of some very pressing intelligence arrived at Versailles from Holland, M. de St. Priest, who was not to have set

off for his Embassy for some days, took leave of Their Majesties on Friday, and yesterday left this City.

The first President of the Parliament of Paris, M. d'Aligre, having received an answer from the King to the representations made by him in the name of his body upon the impossibility of their administ'ring justice at the distance from the Capital to which they are removed, returned on Friday to Troyes ; and it seems to be the opinion of the public that such conciliatory steps have been taken by the Archbishop, as to make it probable that, in a short time, the Parliament will be restor'd to its' usual residence.

64. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
20 Sept. 1787.

On Monday last it was made public that M. de la Luzerne, Governor of the Island of St. Domingo, and Brother of M. de la Luzerne, late Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States, had been appointed Minister of the Marine Department, by His Most Christian Majesty. M. de Montier, late Minister to the Electoral Court of Treves, has also been appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States, in the room of M. de la Luzerne.

I have the honor to inclose to your Lordship a Letter which I have just received from M. de Montmorin, inclosing one from the Maréchal de Castries, in answer to the Duke of Dorset's Complaints, in behalf of the British Mortgagees in Tobago.

65. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
27 Sept. 1787.

In consequence of the accommodation of the differences between the Court and the Parliament, by the consent of the latter to the enregistering a new Edict which, revoking that of the Month of August last, together with the Declaration concerning the Stamp Duty, extends the duration of the second vingtième to the end of the year 1792. The King has been pleased to publish a Declaration, whereby the Parliament is transferred back from Troyes to Paris.

I have the honor to inclose to your Lordship printed Copies of

the new Edict and Declaration ; also of the last Resolution of the Parliament at Troyes, and of the first President's Speech to the King together with His Majesty's Answer.

66. Hailes to Carmarthen, 4 Oct. 1787.

Many circumstances concur, at this time, to make it, in the highest degree, probable, that the French Ministers have, in fact, abandoned all views to the Recovery of the influence of their party in Holland, and that the show of negotiation which they may think proper to keep up, at present, with respect to Dutch Affairs, is intended for no other purpose, than to mislead, and mask the real object of the Armaments, now preparing both by Sea and Land.

The late unequivocal conduct of the King of Prussia, and the Revolution brought about by the March of his Troops into Holland, have (notwithstanding his Declaration given in on the first of this month, by M. de Goltz, to the effect that it was not his wish or intention to loosen the Alliance of France with the Republic) produced a total alteration in the counsels of the French Cabinet, and there can be but little room to doubt that an Alliance between the Imperial Courts and that of Versailles is actually on the carpet, and that nothing less than the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire is the object of the league. So short a time has elapsed since the declaration of War took place at Constantinople, that it can hardly be supposed that any great progress has yet been made in this negotiation, or that any stipulations of partition can have been definitively settled.

It seems to be highly presumable that the policy of France, in thus deserting her ancient connexions with the Porte, arise from the conviction of her inability to prevent the ruin of that Empire in the first place ; and in the next, from her expectation of sharing its spoils with the two Imperial Powers. The particular acquisitions aimed at by France, are supposed to be Egypt, and those Islands in the Archipelago, Candia, Cyprus, &c. which form a communication with Alexandria, Suez, and the Red Sea. The

Union of the British and Dutch Possessions in India, it is expected, will annihilate so completely the maritime commerce of France with that part of the Globe, that, without the competition of a Trade carried on by Land, the English and Dutch together would be enabled to form an oppressive monopoly of the whole produce of India, and lay all the rest of Europe under contribution.

It has been said that when Overtures were first made by the Court of Vienna to the French Ministers to come into its measures respecting Turkey, that *(Sic)* Egypt, in particular, was held out to allure them ; those Overtures are said to have been since renewed, and some expressions which fell lately from Monsieur, the King's Brother, upon that subject, tend to confirm the opinion of the French Cabinet's having listen'd to such a proposal with satisfaction.

But, if, contrary to all probability, it were to be doubted that France had any views with respect to any territorial acquisition, by the dismemberment of the Turkish Dominions, the idea of a Treaty of Alliance between the Imperial Courts and that of Versailles seems by no means to be invalidated. The connexion between England Prussia and Holland require imperiously at this moment that some Balance of power in the other Affairs of Europe should be found.

In further corroboration of the foregoing opinion, it ought also to be observed that the Queen of this Country has been, at all times, desirous of strengthening the ties of Blood, with her Brother, by those of a political nature; that the Abbé de Vermont, who is in her most intimate confidence and has great influence over her, is entirely devoted to the Emperor, and if, as it is generally believed, the Archbishop owes his present high post entirely to this princess, there can be no reason to think he will show himself adverse to Austrian Counsels.

The orders lately issued to the Commanding Officers of Sixty Battalions of Troops, to get ready their equipage and prepare themselves for embarkation in all the ports of France, from the Mediterranean to the Channel, wears a most hostile appearance ; but although, in consequence of these instructions, many applications have been made to Government for the necessary supplies of

Arms, Cloaths, &c., no answers whatever have been returned, and such is the State of the Army, both with respect to the Cavalry and Infantry, that hardly a Regiment in the Service could be made ready for any expedition whatever by the time mentioned, the first of November, and most Regiments are said to be so incomplete as to require a much more considerable space of time before they could be put in motion. It may not be amiss to observe here to your Lordship, that the Circle of Troops that will be formed round the Kingdom by the movements spoken of may also be intended to intimidate those Refractory Provinces, that may be inclined to carry their present spirit of opposition to the commands of the Court, to open resistance.

The differences between the Court and the Parliament of Paris have been adjusted, but it must be confessed in a manner not much to the advantage of the one, or the credit of the other party. The Court, by withdrawing the Edict and Declaration, which had been enregistered with the solemnity of a Lit de Justice, has exhibited to the Nation at large a memorable instance of concession, and has thereby, no doubt, open'd the door to much future opposition. The Parliament, on the other hand, content with an incomplete victory, has entirely abandoned its' original ground, and by acceding to the requisition of the Court for the regist'ring the prolongation of one of the Vingtièmes and the equalization of both, has evidently given up the important point of the Convocation of the States ; it being strongly to be presumed that that measure will never be resorted to till every other plan has failed, and until the uniform resistance of the Parliaments to every kind of Tax, or extension of Tax, shall have made it indispensable. It is, however, observable that, though the Parliament of Paris has given way in this particular instance, those of the Provinces have not yet been brought to any compliance, and it seems reasonable to conclude, from the short time employed in the negotiation at Troyes, that the last Resolutions of that of Paris were adopted singly and without the participation of any others of the Kingdom.

With respect to the equal Assessment throughout all France of the two Vingtièmes, together with the prolongation of the second,

much delay if not difficulty is to be apprehended : for although, by means of the Subdivisions of the Provincial Assemblies, an operation of such a nature may be facilitated, so much time must be required before the value of the Lands, and their real Rents can be ascertained, by a survey and scrutiny, that (unless Money be advanced on account of the Tax, a circumstance not likely from the vague manner in which its' amount is computed and from the difficulties it may meet with in the collection) little immediate relief can be reasonably expected to the exigencies of the present moment.

The Archbishop of Toulouse, whose views, from the earliest part of Life, have been invariably directed to the attainment of the high post of which he is now in possession, began his Administration, as your Lordship knows, by collecting some of the disjointed materials of M. de Calonne's plan, and by endeavouring to fit them to the present emergency as well as he could, without having seriously recourse to that system of economy and retrenchment which, although he had promised it, he, in common with all his Predecessors, knew to be pregnant with the greatest difficulty and danger to the Minister who should be bold enough to persist in it. But the voice of the Nation has been so loudly heard in the Remonstrances and Resolutions of the Parliaments for the Archbishop to flatter himself that anything at all could be done towards remedying the disorder of the Finances, without holding out at least a prospect of Reform.

It was, I apprehend, upon the fullest conviction of the impracticability of a plan of such a nature, to any extent, consistently with the security of his place, that M. de Calonne, or rather those by whom he was guided, brought forward his scheme for raising the income of the Sovereign to his expenditure :—the many examples, and in particular, the so celebrated one of M. Neckar, sacrificed after a successful administration, to the intrigues of those whose places and emoluments he had suppressed, seem'd sufficient to deter any Minister, from adopting a line of conduct that had reform particularly in view. In a Government like this, where it is so necessary to attach the leading Men of the Nation to the

Court, by gratifying their avidity, the project of M. de Calonne certainly offered the most splendid advantages, and whatever may be said of it on account of some parts that have a remote tendency to the limitation of the power of the Crown, it must be acknowledged that, in general, it would have produced a contrary effect. A Sovereign of France in possession of a liberated, and even augmented Revenue, appears to be in no real danger of the loss of his authority. If the principle which I have here ventured to establish with all due deference to your Lordship's judgment, should be admitted, it will follow, I conceive, of course, that either the operations of the Archbishop in the way of retrenchment and reform, will (as is most probable) be never carried fairly through ; or, if they should be, that they must necessarily tend, in proportion to this extent, to diminish that influence which is so indispensably required in an arbitrary Government, and ultimately bring about the disgrace of their Author.

Before I close this Letter, I ought not to omit to observe to your Lordship, that the very partial manner in which the accounts of the Resolution that Great Britain had taken to arm, and had communicated (as by agreement) to this Court, were disseminated, carries with it the appearance of a design to fix the blame of aggression upon England. The last Declaration of the Court of Versailles, given in by M. de Barthelemy, has been kept a secret from the public, and the single circumstance of the communication (a consequence, it is presumed, of the Step taken by France) was so much weighed upon, and so generally circulated, as to look very much as if the Court had hopes of spiriting up the Nation to call for a War, under the false notion of the ambition and injustice of Great Britain.

It may not be useless to inform your Lordship, as a proof of the readiness with which the Court of Petersbourg receives and conveys every unfavorable impression of the conduct of our Ambassador at Constantinople, that the Russian Minister in his last Despatch to M. de Simolin makes mention that Sir Robert Ainslie had spoken boastingly of the Turkish Ships of War, and had compared them to the best in the British Navy.

By a Letter from Cherson we learn that a number of sail of Turkish Vessels had already commenced hostilities in the Black Sea, by attacking a Russian Frigate near Oczakow. The Frigate is said to have sunk two or three of the Turkish Ships, and afterwards to have taken shelter in port. The Letter bears date the 1st. of September.

P.S. I have taken the liberty of communicating the greater part of what is contained in this Despatch to Mr. Grenville, both in conversation and in writing, in the hopes that some of the information might not be useless to him.

67. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN,
9 Oct. 1787.

The inclosed Note, together with the State of the intended disposition of the French Troops on the Coasts of the Ocean and the Channel, I have just this moment obtained from Versailles, and have the greatest reason to rely on the authenticity of the information they contain. The Charts of the Coast of Normandy, with the Manuscript volume entitled, *Reconnaissance Militaire de la Normandie*, and which is explanatory of the charts, are from the same hand, and are executed with the most minute exactness. These last are, together with this Despatch, directed to be delivered into your Lordship's own hands.

Since M. de St. Priest's return from Holland, the opinion of the public concerning the probability of War is certainly become more general than it has hitherto been ; and I cannot but think that the language held by the Ambassador has contributed, a good deal, to enflame the minds of many in high stations, if not in the direction of Affairs. Acts of extreme severity, and even of cruelty, are imputed to the Stadtholder's party, during the Revolution which has been effected ; and, I do not doubt but that the recital of circumstances of such a nature by a person of the reputed moderation of Monsr. de St. Priest must have great weight.

I need not suggest to your Lordship's wisdom how much is to be apprehended from a universal sense of the necessity of War, and from that degree of unanimity that may arise from a general notion

(however ill-grounded) of injustice and provocation on the part of England. The distresses of the people may be cheerfully borne ; a ministry may be consolidated ; and even a failure, whether partial or general, in national engagements may be palliated and, perhaps, excused should such a spirit be ever raised in the public.

I will venture to observe to your Lordship, with the utmost deference, that it is the opinion of many Men of judgement and discernment here that, if France were to remain a year or two longer undisturbed, that the necessity of contracting her expenditure might induce her to direct the greater part of her operations of economy and retrenchment to the War and Marine Departments, and thereby render her much less formidable than she is at present.

P.S. Monsr. de Suffrein has been appointed Commander in Chief of His Most Christian Majesty's Naval Forces on the Ocean, and M. Albert de Rioms of those in the Mediterranean.

68. Dorset to Carmarthen
11 Oct. 1787.

...The last accounts from Holland being such as to render any further interference on the part of this Court totally impossible for the present, their object immediately next in view will be, I conceive, the affair of the Porte, and I understand there may be much difficulty in persuading the French Cabinet that Sir Robert Ainslie has not been the cause of fomenting the rupture which has taken place between the Empress of Russia and the Turks. I shall, however, give every assurance in my power to M. de Montmorin that the suspicions which exist in regard to Sr. R. Ainslie's conduct upon this occasion are entirely false, and I am enabled to support this opinion by the contents of a Letter I receiv'd from that Minister a few days before I left London, dated Constantinople the 17th of August.

Nevertheless it is necessary, My Lord, that I should have the most unequivocal assurances from His Majesty's Ministers upon this matter, that, in case Sr. Robert has from zeal for His Majesty's service taken a too active part, he did it *de son chef*, unauthorized

by the British Cabinet. I am the more anxious to be furnish'd with such assurances at this moment when it may be apprehended that this Court is dispos'd to entertain some doubts and jealousies of the disposition of England...

69. HAILES TO CARMARTHEN.
11 Oct. 1787.

...The differences between the Court and the Parliaments, and even the great work of economy and reform are lost sight of by the public, and nothing is attended to but the grand question of War or peace. I have been told, and I fear it is too true, that the Ministers have no longer any confidence in what is said to them on the part of England ;—M. de Montmorin is said to have declared in a tone of resignation, that if the English were resolved upon War, they must have it.

Monsieur de Mercy and Monsieur de Simolin betray no little anxiety for a pacification between England and France : and they, in common with the public, affect to be much surprised that any appearance of hostility should remain, after so entire a settlement of the Affairs of Holland, and so favorable a one for the interests of Great Britain. But I have no doubt but that their alarm arises from an idea that opposition is intended to be made to the ambitious projects of their two Imperial Courts, and that England is arming at this time in Defence of the Turks...

70. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
12 Oct. 1787.

I have this day according to appointment seen M. de Montmorin, from whose conversation I gather'd that France has not the smallest intention of sending Forces into Holland, since there no longer exists there any cause to be decided by her support, yet that she cannot, consistently with her own honor and dignity, relax in her preparations of defence so long as His Prussian Majesty continues to have an Army of such force in the Provinces of the States General or so near upon her frontiers as Wesel ; and moreover so long as Great Britain threatens her with such a formidable naval

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armament as she is now preparing.—M. de Montmorin, expressing himself on the subject of disarming, seem'd to think it might reasonably be expected that the proposal should originate with us, since, as he observ'd, we had been foremost to begin to arm : if therefore we would consent to come forward and make such a proposal, that then France would be ready to go step by step with us to the finally counter-ordering of all her preparations ; such an engagement nevertheless to hold good on condition that the Prussians do not remain in force upon the Frontier of this Country, so as to induce the necessity of continuing its Armaments ; for should it be apprehended that the Prince of Orange's interest might be endanger'd by the withdrawing of the Prussian Army, and that we have pledg'd ourselves to join in support of Him, that France could not in that case do otherwise than put herself upon such a footing as would be fully justified by those measures. Such, My Lord, was the tenor of the Minister's language ; yet I have no doubt that it is the real wish of His Most Christian Majesty's Servants to maintain Peace ; unless they shall be driven to extremities by violent proceedings on our part, which I do not conceive to be the object of His Majesty's Cabinet.

M. de Montmorin indeed betray'd a suspicion that the Prussian Army is kept together with other views than what relates to Holland and seem'd to apprehend that England and Prussia may have in contemplation to unite in thwarting the designs of the French Court but in case His Most Christian Majesty shall be induc'd to take a part in the present rupture between Russia and the Porte : it is on this account I am desirous of being empower'd to satisfy the Minister in regard to the conduct of Sr. Robert Ainslie who is firmly believed here (tho' I cannot but think very unjustly) to have contributed to that rupture. It will be needless for me to confer any more with M. de Montmorin while matters remain in the present state of suspence ; but in the mean time it would be a great satisfaction to me to be inform'd how far we have engag'd ourselves to support His Prussian Majesty in the vigorous measures he is now pursuing.

We have no accounts from Amsterdam.

P.S. M. de Montmorin disbelieves the report of a revolt having taken place at St. Domingo.

71. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
18 Oct. 1787.

...I am happy that your Lordship has convey'd to me the certainty, I might almost say, I entertain'd, that I have not lost the confidence of His Majesty's Ministers ; but I still feel it absolutely necessary that your Lordship should further confirm this assurance in such a manner as will carry conviction to the mind of the French Minister.

Thinking it might be of importance that His Majesty should be made acquainted, in the present situation of things, with the relative footing of this Court and that of Vienna, I have made some enquiries upon that subject, the result of which seems to arise from circumstances so natural that they appear to be by no means unworthy of attention. During the administration of M. de Vergennes, no measures were taken to cultivate the least connection with the Court of Vienna : that Minister having always professed a jealousy of the system of Politics adopted by the Prince Kaunitz[1] with a view to the destruction of the Turkish Empire, which Monsr. de Vergennes had ever consider'd as a great barrier to the rising ambition of Austria as well as a great source of wealth to His Most Christian Majesty's Dominions. This conduct of M. de Vergennes gave great disgust to those who look'd upon Austria as the safest Ally for France, and who were therefore always at work (tho' without effect) to undermine him in the King's opinion.

Since the death of that judicious Minister and experienc'd Politician things seem to have taken a different course, and the Emperor's friendship appears now to be the object in view and systematically pursued ; This plan is the more likely to be persever'd in on account of the secret correspondence that has been uniformly held between the Archbishop of Thoulouse and Prince Kaunitz ever since the marriage of the present King's with the Emperor's Sister : This secret communication arose from a part-

[1] (1711-1794).

icular circumstance : L'Abbé Vermont was sent to Vienna by the late Duc de Choiseul in order to teach the then intended Dauphiness the French language: the Archbishop of Thoulouse, whose ambition has always been unbounded, being intimately acquainted with the Abbé, thought this an opportunity not to be lost of trying, through the means of France's connection with Austria, to ingratiate himself with the Cabinet of Vienna so as one day or other to obtain some consideration at Versailles : however the dismission of the Duc de Choiseul from His Majesty's Councils entirely overset the views of the Archbishop, as both M. de Maurepas and M. de Vergennes set their faces against Imperial connection.

The Tables are now turn'd (if I may use the expression) and the Archbishop, who is still closely connected with the same Abbé, wishes to renew his favorite system of uniting the two Courts, under the idea of its being an arrangement perfectly agreeable to Her Majesty, who, he is persuaded, has such a connection very much at heart. Your Lordship may depend upon it that no great progress has as yet been made in this business, for the French are by no means cordially dispos'd towards the Austrians, yet still the plan is likely to be pursued tho' it be only with a view of revenge at some future opportunity on the King of Prussia ; it may therefore be advisable to keep a watchfull eye, especially at this moment, upon a matter which I conceive to be well worthy the attention of His Majesty's Ministers.

Monsr. de Montmorin's conversations tend to convince me that this Country, situated as it is in regard both to its internal resource and external power of defence,will not, unless in case of provocation not to be brook'd, be forc'd into measures of hostility which it is so evidently its interest to avoid if possible.

I am the more convinc'd of this by an insinuation of the Minister (for he has not openly avow'd so much) that His Most Christian Majesty has no longer any design of interfering in the Affairs of Holland in any manner that might give umbrage to either Great Britain or Prussia ; Nor do I believe that France will determinately oppose any arrangement that may be propos'd by those two Powers for the re-establishment of the Prince of Orange in all

His rights and privileges, such as they were settled in 1747 and in 1766.

M. de Montmorin in conversation on Tuesday last slightly touch'd upon the present rupture between the Russians and the Turks, and I took the opportunity of reading to him your Lordship's Despatch No. 19, the contents of which, so far as they regard the conduct of Our Court, seem'd to satisfy him entirely, as indeed I had reason to think, he already was by the assurances I had given him ; but he appears still to retain his suspicions with respect to the part said to have been taken by Sr. Robert Ainslie.

Preparations have lately been carried on with great activity : Troops are moving towards the Coast and several Regiments are under Orders for both the West and East Indies : None are however as yet embark'd, nor can any be ready sooner than the 26th Inst. Neither are there yet any King's Ships in a state to send to Sea, excepting two Frigates which are sail'd from Toulon for the protection of Trade in the Mediterranean.

It is expected that a Conseil de la Marine will shortly be formed nearly upon the same plan as that of the War.

Monsr. de Moutier left Paris on Wednesday last for Brest where he was to embark on board a Frigate for America...

72. DORSET AND EDER TO CARMARTHEN, 19 Oct. 1787.

We received early this Morning the Despatches from Berlin of which we have the honour to inclose Copies, and as soon as we had sufficiently considered their Contents, we went together to Monsr. de Montmorin.—We had already apprized him of the Form of Declaration, which we should be authorized to deliver to him, in the supposition of our receiving the full concurrence of His Prussian Majesty to the Measure, and in the supposition also that the Projet of a Counter Declaration which your Lordship had transmitted to Us would in substance be adopted :—and here we must observe that, tho' the Words in that projet may in many respects be the same as the French Minister himself had originally suggested, it appeared impossible to succeed in prescribing to this Court to

adopt a particular Form of Words ; and we therefore applied ourselves to the obtaining such a Contre-declaration, as might be consonant to our Instructions, and not inconsistent with the Communication of the Prussian Minister as transmitted to us by Mr. Ewart.[1]

Monsr. de Montmorin inform'd us that he had discuss'd the Business last Night in the Council. As the Result of that Discussion he produced a Sketch or Minute which he had just prepared for a Contre-declaration :—This Minute stated "That the Court of France never had meant to interfere by Force in the Affairs of the Republic ; that the Notification made by M. Barthélemi was induced by the necessity of protecting the Territories of an allied State against a Foreign Force, and that when the necessity shall cease by the withdrawing the said Force, then His Most Christian Majesty would not hesitate to declare &c."

It was sufficiently apparent that this Projet was stated to us, rather for the purpose of beginning the discussion, than from any Idea of its being to be adopted ; and we at once intimated that it was utterly inadmissible.

After much Conference, and repeated Propositions and Corrections, the French Minister at length prepared a new projet, and also a Note or Minute for his private Use, of what had farther pass'd that might be material for him to state to His Most Chr. Majesty :— we inclose Copies of both these Papers and also of our proposed Declaration, for the purpose of making some slight changes which were recommended to us, and to which we see no material Objection.

Monsr. de Montmorin closed the Conference by informing Us that He would immediately report, what had pass'd to His Most Christian Majesty, who would probably refer him without delay to a Council with some of the other Ministers, and that he would communicate the Result by a Letter to us, still considering the Business however as having no Ministerial existence till signed and exchang'd—After we had quitted him, we were call'd back— Monsr. de Goltz having arrived, who repeated in our presence the

[1] English Minister at the Louth of Berlin.

inclosed Extract of a Despatch which he had received by the English Courier from Berlin.—M. de Montmorin seem'd dispos'd to receive the Extract as the Assurance which is described in his Minute already referred to.—M. de Goltz added that this Proposition of with-drawing the Troops was provisional and subject to His Prussian Majesty being satisfactorily inform'd that the recent arrangements in the Dutch Provinces will not be interrupted by France, but will be suffered to remain *in statu quo*:—In Truth M. de Montmorin has often express'd to us in substance that such is the intention of this Court, and that France acquiesces in what has happened, and we presume that M. de Goltz will make a similar Report, exclusive of the same Idea being strongly specified in the inclosed Projet of the Contredeclaration.—

It is possible that M. de Montmorin may transmit to us the Projet with some Alterations.—It is also very possible that he may send it without any Alteration, and propose to us the immediate signature of the two Instruments:—We have agreed under the latter supposition, according to the best Judgement that we can form of all the Circumstances before us, to decline signing till we hear from your Lordship.—We submit however to the Wisdom of His Majesty, and of His Ministers, the expediency of relieving the Business from this Suspence with all possible Despatch.

Whilst we were settling this Dispatch Monsr. de Goltz call'd here:—we thought it right to communicate to him the Minute proposed by M. de Montmorin for the Contre Declaration:—The Prussian Minister said that he would not presume to give a positive Opinion, but that he firmly and *warmly* believed that the Proposition, if it should not be materially chang'd at Versailles would give the most perfect satisfaction to His Prussian Majesty...

73. Dorset to Carmarthen, 20 Oct. 1787.

The inclos'd answer from the French Minister, together with the Paper which accompanies it, was transmitted to us in the night. As it is extremely material for your Lordship and His Majesty's Ministers to be inform'd that this Court definitively con-

sents to give the Contre-declaration, according to the Projet now transmitted, we think it right to apprize your Lordship of so interesting a circumstance without delay.

We do not apprehend that the new words inserted will be deem'd objectionable ; on the contrary they mark (what is true) that His Prussian Majesty has enter'd so generously and so specifically into the measure, that He has made a communication by His Minister to this Court to facilitate it, which communication is accepted and acknowledg'd here by the new words now proposed.

If the objections or alterations which may occur further to His Majesty's Ministers should not be thought material and even necessary, we presume to hope that, under the circumstances wherein this Court finds itself, it will not be thought eligible to urge the matter farther :—and consequently that very immediately after receiving your Lordship's answer to this Despatch, or to that transmitted last night, we shall have it our power to congratulate your Lordship upon the final and satisfactory close of this most important transaction.

74. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
25 Oct. 1787.

I have communicated to M. de Montmorin the contents of your Lordship's Despatch No. *22* and I was very glad to find that Minister fully disposed to adopt the idea of His Majesty's Confidential Servants with respect to the appointment of Naval Officers on the part of either Country to inspect the disarming, in case matters shall happily so terminate. He means accordingly to propose the sending two officers of distinction in the service—viz—One of the rank of *Chef d'Escadre* and the other of the rank of Capitain in the Navy who will be named immediately if the measure of disarming is decided upon.

M. de Montmorin appears to be in very good humour and very pacifically inclin'd, but has betrayed some uneasiness lest the newly-propos'd Declaration should not be approv'd of in England; and indeed in the actual situation of Affairs, near as they seem to be to an amicable settlement, should any fresh cause of delay

arise, there is yet danger that the ill-humour, which has been some time fostering, may break out in a degree beyond the power of any after moderation on our part to restrain. It was strongly reported here the other day that an Order had been sent to Brest for the sailing of a Number of Frigates in consequence of intelligence having been received that six of Our Frigates were cruizing off Ushant. There was however no truth in the report, nor indeed did I think it likely that, while a negotiation is on foot with a view to avert war, a measure should be taken which might possibly bring in some act of hostility.

M. d'Alvensleben arrived here last Sunday Night from Berlin: He is very warm in his professions of gratitude to the Court of England for their handsome support of His Prussian Majesty during the late transactions in Holland; and I am persuaded that we shall not meet with any difficulty on the part of the Court of Berlin. The appearance of M. d'Alvensleben at Court last Tuesday seem'd to occasion a no slight sensation there.

There is reason to believe that the publication of M. de Calonne's Mémoire has injur'd the Archbishop of Thoulouse in the public opinion, and something that fell from M. de Montmorin last Tuesday inclines me to suspect that he is by no means cordially attached to the principles and plans now pursuing by the Archbishop; nor is it at all unlikely that a degree of jealousy should subsist between these two Ministers, for although M. de Montmorin is young in Office, he is nevertheless senior to the Archbishop, and does not I conceive feel himself well pleased at seeing the Archbishop daily making such strides to become the sole and confidential Minister.

There is also a coolness between the Archbishop and the Baron de Breteuil, which in all probability will end in the dismission of the latter. The Archbishop's ambition will not brook even the shadow of a rival in power, and therefore it may be supposed that he will not rest 'till he has placed a Friend of his own in the Department which the Baron at present holds.

An Order has been sent from the Administration to the Directors of the East India Company to prepare and lay before Government a Memorial containing all the reasons the Company has to urge in

favor of their exclusive privilege. This order carries with it an appearance of candor and an intention on the part of the Government to regulate their decision for the existence or suppression of the Company according to the weight or weakness of the arguments offered. But the fate of the Company is already decided and that even steps have been taken for procuring a Loan from a Body of Free Merchants as a price to be paid for the annihilation of that Company. What the Terms are (if any have yet been proposed) is not known...

Letters from Constantinople mention that the Russian Fleet, consisting of twelve Sail of Line of Battle Ships, had been dispers'd in a violent gale of wind, and that a 74 Gun Ship, being totally dismasted, had fallen into the hands of the Turks: the rest of the Fleet had not been heard of.

This intelligence did not produce the least effect at Versailles on Tuesday last, which makes me conclude the anxiety here is not very great for any success against the Ottomans.

P.S. Your Lordship may depend upon it that the Fleet at Brest is by no means in any forwardness : there are only twelve Ships of the Line they can possibly send to Sea and those not for some weeks to come : the rest of the Fleet is in a deplorable state.

75. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
Versailles 27 Oct. 1787.

We have the Honour to transmit to your Lordship, a Copy of the Declaration which we sign'd here to Night and delivered to M. le Comte de Montmorin, and the Contre-declaration which was at the same Time sign'd by His Excellency and delivered by him to us :—And also the Duplicate of a joint Declaration which was afterwards settled and exchanged...

76. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
Versailles 27 Oct. 1787.

The French Minister after some reluctance and discussion consented to all the alterations and additions, which we were instructed to propose to him in the Projects of the Declaration and Contre-

Declaration ; and tho' he proposed some corrections on his part, he did not adhere to them, nor is there the change of a Syllable in what was last transmitted to us by your Lordship...

77. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
1 Nov. 1787.

.....Various are the conjectures respecting the durability of the Archbishop's Administration. He is pursuing all possible means to fortify himself at Court, sensible as he must be that he is very much out of favor with the Public ; and indeed how should it be otherwise when it is consider'd that, possessing immense riches himself, he deprives (without any distinction of services, of established right, nor, one might add, even of national honour) so many Families of that property which they had always looked upon to be as much their own as their private landed Estates : for I do not admit it even as a problem that Louis 16 has the power, without a degree of violation of His Coronation-Oath, of taking away what Louis 15 had formally given ;

Yet the Archbishop is now making His Master do as much in more instances than one : in Short what is now doing is little less than a national Bankruptcy, which scarcely could justify such violent and injurious measures. The Loan of twelve Millions announced for the purpose of establishing four Hospitals in the room of the Hôtel Dieu, has already been protested against by the Parliament *en vacation*. This Loan notwithstanding, the *paternal* manner in which it is proposed to the Public by the Preamble to the Arrêt, which lately appeared bears strongly the appearance of an Expedient for the immediate relief of the Minister's distress ; for certain it is that the Archbishop, a few days since, sent to Monsr. de Villeneuve, Receiver of the Annuities of the Hôtel de Ville, for three Millions of the twelve which he had flattered himself would be subscrib'd, but the money was not to be had ; and it is said that the *Denonciation* of the Parliament has already prevented many from paying in their subscriptions.

There does not seem, so far as I can judge by appearances, to

remain any degree of ill-humour against England, tho' there is visibly a little awkwardness felt on occasion of the humiliating terms to which this Court has been obliged to subscribe :—the French are at all events disposed to forgive and to forget our conduct towards them in the late business, sooner than that of the Court of Berlin.

I cannot as yet pretend to have penetrated into the resolutions likely to be adopted by the French Cabinet in respect to the present situation of Affairs between the Imperial and Ottoman Courts, but I am of opinion that Ministry will not advise His Most Christian Majesty to employ his interference in any way whatsoever.

The Russians are certainly very jealous of the conduct of this Court and have already given indirect hints of the number of French Officers known to be engaged in the Ottoman Service : No answer however has been given but a general one which conveys that no Officers have had permission to join the Turks since the commencement of Hostilities :—There is a very clever Man, whose name is Lafitte, who has been employed in fortifying Oczakow ; a circumstance that has given no small umbrage to Her Imperial Majesty.

I send your Lordship inclosed the Copy of a Letter which has been [received] by Monsr. de Simolin from the Russian Ambassador at Warsaw : this Letter contains the latest accounts of the Russian Fleet in the Black Sea previous to its being separated by a violent gale of wind which happen'd between the 19th and 25th of September.....

78. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
1 Nov. 1787.

We have not omitted to communicate to Monsr. de Montmorin, that it is His Majesty's Intention, immediately on being inform'd that the Declarations for disarming have been exchanged, to reduce the Augmentation lately made by His Majesty in His Land Forces ;—with an Exception only of such Troops as may be necessary to compleat the Addition which His Majesty proposes to make to the Peace Establishment of His foreign Possessions. — The French

Minister in return assured us that the Troops of this Kingdom would be immediately order'd back from the Frontiers to their usual stations, except such as it may be thought expedient to embark for the Islands, or the Isle de France: we have understood that it was in contemplation to send three Battalions to the former and one to the latter, in great measure as necessary additions and at the utmost to place them in a state of Defence.—We farther stated, pursuant to the Instructions from your Ldp, that in order to avoid any Occasion of Jealousy in different Parts of the World, it was His Majesty's Wish, that an Explanation should take place on both sides respecting such additional Force to be embark'd; and that it would be a new Proof of good Intelligence being re-establish'd to suspend the Departure till such Explanation has taken place.—M. de Montmorin adopted this suggestion readily and cordially and said that He would immediately give the orders accordingly.—It remains therefore with your Lordship to state the Degree of Explanation which you wish to take place; and we have reason to believe that it will be thoroughly reciprocal on the Part of this Court.

We trust that we have now given a full and satisfactory Attention to every part of the joint Instructions which your Lordship had transmitted to us.

79. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
8 Nov. 1787.

.....The Reforms are going on very rapidly: The Archbishop is steady to all his plans of economy, and rather piques himself upon never giving way to the representations that are made to him by those who are of opinion that he pushes the matter with too much rigour:—there is certainly a violent outcry against him among the Public, and it is thought that the Parliament, at their next Meeting which will be in the course of this Month, will be but little disposed to grant him any further supplies.

The Parliament of Grenoble has already protested against the levying of the *Deuxiême Vingtiême*, and went so far as to threaten to hang the Person appointed to collect it, if he persisted in the

execution of his orders; the Commissary accordingly is returned to Paris without having attempted anything further.—Of the Reforms that are immediately to take place—The Gardes du Corps will be greatly reduced, and it is said that the King's own Regiment of Foot, consisting of four Battalions, will be broke ;—of which—two Battalions are to be incorporated with the French Guards, and the other two are either to form a distinct Regiment, or are to be employed in completing those Regiments that are at present deficient in numbers. The King's Regiment enjoyed peculiar privileges which were very burthensome to the Public. The French Guards will in consequence of this augmentation, be obliged to take the Duty of guarding the City of Paris by day and by night, and the *Guet* or Watch Troops will be suppressed.

The Manufactury at Carcassonne of light Cloths, exported from Marseilles for the consumption of the Levant, has decreased very considerably since the Commercial Treaty took effect : above a thousand Workmen are said to be without employment in that Branch.

A Journal of the Proceedings of the Provincial Assemblies is about to be publish'd, and is to be continued periodically.

80. Dorset to Carmarthen, 15 Nov. 1787.

..... The Parliament assembled last Monday for the mere form of opening the sessions : The Members heard Mass publicly : great crowds of people collected together upon the occasion and testified much joy. The Court, as is usual after a long Vacation, adjourned for eight days and will accordingly sit for the despatch of business on Monday next, when, it is expected, very interesting Debates will take place. It is thought that a new Loan of 110 millions will be wholly rejected unless the King consents to name a time for assembling les États Généraux.

What part the Archbishop will act on that occasion it is difficult to foresee, but after the concessions that have already been made to the Parliament, it is not probable that that Body will give way, and it is the less likely at this moment, now that the People have

been taught to believe that their cause and that of the Parliament are one and the same. A double Guard has been appointed in consequence of the Meeting of the Parliament.

The expences incurred to this Country by the late preparations have amounted to a no less sum than thirty-five millions of livres Tournois ; a clear loss to France and their Friends in Holland : while on the other hand England receives ample recompence in the solid advantages obtained by having so successfully contributed towards reinstating His Highness the Stadtholder in all His Rights and Privileges.

81. DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
20 Nov. 1787.

The importance of the proceedings of the Parliament yesterday at its' first meeting upon business induces me to give.... the earliest account possible..... The account I now at last send is less perfect than I could wish owing to the great difficulty there is in getting to the knowledge of the exact truth in matters of so great moment...

His Majesty open'd the business of the day in a long speech (which He read) containing among other things the reasons for his coming to the Parliament : He then presented an Edict, consisting of 27 Articles, in favour of the Protestants, which in part annulls the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes; His Majesty next produced another Edict, containing also 27 Articles, for the purpose of obtaining a Loan of 400 millions, of which it is proposed to raise 120 millions in the year 1788, and the remainder, gradually diminishing, from year to year till 1792, at which Epoch His Majesty gave to understand that He hoped to make it appear to the Nation assembled that the Finances of the State were in a flourishing condition. His Majesty took occasion to observe that the conduct of the Parliament of Bordeaux had been very reprehensible. It is not possible at present to obtain any of the Edicts, but I am informed that the one respecting the Protestants was not found objectionable : Some people suppose that this Edict is proposed at this time with a view to induce the discontented Dutch to settle in

France ; tho' it is certain that a plan for the re-establishment of the Protestants was in agitation long before it could have been even apprehended that the affairs of Holland would terminate so unfavorably for this Country. It may perhaps be more acceptable to the Nation under that idea, but it certainly was not a principal reason for bringing it forward at this moment : Monsr. de Malsherbes, Ministre d'Etat, has been the great promoter of it.

The Edict respecting the Loan created such an effect upon the minds of the Members in general, who had been expecting that it would be proposed to them to assemble *les Etats Généraux*, that the whole business of the day ended in the utmost confusion: the King left the Court saying—" Je veux que l'emprunt soit enregistré "—and did not wait until the Votes should be taken, upon which the Duc d'Orleans observed that His Majesty was acting rather illegally, who replied to His Highness in a very laconic manner and repeated that he was resolved to have it so.

It is supposed that the Prince has by this conduct given great umbrage to the King, and it is not very improbable that he may in consequence of it be sent into exile, in case the Parliament shall persist in their support of the opinion thus expressed by the Duc d'Orleans, and accordingly refuse to register the Edict for the new Loan.

The unusual length of yesterday's sitting was owing to the voluminous Papers necessary to be read in His Majesty's presence, and to the speeches of some of the Members on the several points as they were in course brought forward. When His Majesty was coming away from the Parliament the populace were very silent, tho' there had been some acclamations on His arrival ; but the number of persons collected together was not so great as usual on account of its not having been known at Paris 'till late the preceding evening that the King intended going to the Parliament.

Separate. 11 o'Clock A.M. I have this moment received the following particulars which do not materially differ from the account I have already given your Lordship excepting that the Loan is much more considerable than it was yesterday reported to

be. I send them to your Lordship in the form in which they are communicated to me.

1. Édit pour l'enregistrement d'un emprunt de 120 millions pendant cinque ans.
2. État civil des Protestans.
3. Suppression des quelques Maisons religieuses.
4. Nomination de M. L'Archivêque de Toulouse Premier Ministre.

None of these propositions were decided upon : even that relating to the Protestants was taken ad referendum. The Parliament separated at 8 o'Clock and adjourned to this morning at ten and it is expected that the King will return again on Thursday .....

82 Dorset to Carmarthen, 22 Nov. 1787.

.....It appears that, in my last Despatch No. 71, I erred in two or three points. His Majesty produced only two propositions to the Parliament which were, two Edicts, one respecting the *État Civil des Protestans*, and the other for a Loan of *420* millions to be raised in the course of five years—viz. 120 millions the first year (1788) ;—90 millions the second year ;—80 millions the third year ;—70 millions the fourth, and 60 millions the fifth year, at which Epoch (1792) His Majesty, in His Speech, said He *hoped to be able* to show to the *Nation assembled le rétablissement* total de ses Finances ; but the very vague manner in which His Majesty expressed Himself in regard to the Etats Généraux and the *rétablissement de Finances* was considered as by no means satisfactory ; notwithstanding which, the Parliament, sensible of the extreme distress of Government, was disposed to grant the supplies demanded by the King, if the question had, according to the usual form of proceeding, been regularly put to the vote, which, owing to a circumstance, that has already produced some tumult and may in the end occasion a very serious fermentation, did not take place : the circumstance happen'd in the following manner ; His Majesty, as I stated to your Lordship in my Despatch, No. 71, stayed at the Parliament to hear the Debates upon

His two Propositions : that which relates to the Protestants met with little or no difficulty ; but several Members delivered their sentiments upon the Loan to whom His Majesty attended with much apparent patience, but, at the close of the Debates rose with some degree of warmth and observed that, having heard the arguments of His Parliament both for and against His Proposition, He demanded the immediate registry of the Loan, which was in fact executed ; it was at this moment that the Duc d'Orleans rose to express his opinion of the illegality of a forced registry of an Edict; the assembly being then met, as His Highness observed, under the denomination of a *Séance Royale*, and not of a *Lit de Justice*, wherein alone the *Souvereign* has been accustomed to exercise that degree of authority. The Edict however, having been registered by command, a Protest was immediately entered up against the proceedings of the day, and the registry declared thereby null and void. It is said that, had the Members proceeded to vote, a Majority would have been found for the Loan : The Archbishop having had, it is affirmed, the strongest assurances in his favor ; and indeed it is not to be supposed that He would have advised His Majesty to meet His Parliament without such assurances. The proposed Loan now stands in a very strange predicament ; nevertheless it is generally expected that it will fill by degrees ; the terms being so extremely advantageous, no less than from ten to eleven pr. Ct., which is nearly five pr. Ct. more than was produced by Mr. Neckar's Loan, which was established some time before the conclusion of the last War.

The backwardness, which at present shows itself, indicates a no very favourable opinion of the Minister, and of the durability of his Administration ; indeed his want of firmness of conduct so conspicuous in several instances, gives him but little chance of enjoying long the support and confidence of the public.

The Parliament met the following morning (Tuesday) to deliberate on the Edict concerning the Protestants, but adjourn'd, for the further consideration of that matter, 'till the 28th of this Month.

I send your Lordship herewith an Extract, consisting of a small

part of His Majesty's Speech, and I enclose also the *Arrêté du Parlement* of the 19th (Monday) which contains the Protest against the whole of the Proceedings on that day..

On Tuesday evening the King sent a message requiring the attendance of the Parliament at Versailles the following day (Wednesday). Accordingly le Premier President d'Aligre attended by forty of the principal Members attended and were received by His Majesty in His own Apartment, who told them that He considered the Registry executed in His presence as legal and valid, added that He must not hear of any further difficulties, that in regard to the Etats Généraux he would not enter into any positive engagement, but that, having assured them of His intention to lay before the Nation assembled the State of the Finances, they ought to rely upon his Royal word for the performance of it, for which however His Majesty said He could not fix any precise period. As soon as His Majesty had finish'd speaking, Monsr. d'Aligre delivered to Him the following.

Arrêté du Parlement du 21 9br (?) 1787....

To this His Majesty returned a very laconic and unsatisfactory answer purporting that He had thought proper to banish during His pleasure three of Their Members, and that He should Himself judge of the expediency of restoring to them their liberty : The Deputation as might be expected, was exceedingly dissatisfied with their reception, and strongly express'd it by their look and manner, of which I was myself a witness for I happen'd to see them at the moment of their leaving the King.

This day the Parliament, having summon'd the Peers to attend, are sitting, and it is expected that some resolutions, very unpleasant to the Court and the Ministers, will have taken place ; it is impossible to say to what length things may be carried : Money must be had at any rate, for it is a well known fact that at the end of this month there would not be sufficient to pay the Troops....

83 DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
22 Nov. 1787.

.... The following little circumstance will serve to give Your

Lordship some idea of the Archbishop's plan in regard to the Parliament.

Monsieur d'Epremenil qui avoit hier un Rendez vous chez Monsieur l'Achivêque de Thoulouse, y est arrivé à cinque heures. Le Ministre lui a dit, que les Choses étoient bien changées de face, et, que le Roi *étoit decidé a se porter aux plus grandes extremités contre le Parlement.*

Another Circumstance I cannot help mentioning to Your Lordship, is, that an Order has been sent to all the Adherents, and Friends of Monsieur de Calonne, not, by any means to think of going to him in England.

84 DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
26 Nov. 1787.

I send your Lordship herewith the printed Proceedings of the Parliament up to the 21st. Inst., since which period the loan has begun to fill, and will, it is thought, be compleat in a no very long space of time. On Saturday evening from eighteen to twenty millions were subscribed, and some of the principal Bankers have engaged to furnish a large share of the remaining part.....

85 DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
29 Nov. 1787.

I had the honor of sending your Lordship, by the Post last Monday, the printed Proceedings of the Parliament up to the 21st. Inst. Within these few days things have taken a very sudden and extraordinary turn : from an appearance of much confusion everything seems now to denote an implicit obedience to the will of the Sovereign.

The exile of the Duc d'Orleans, and the imprisonment of two Magistrates of the Parliament, followed by an express promise on the part of His Majesty to assemble the *Etats Généraux*, have produced the most salutary effects for His Majesty's Government ; and, there is reason to believe, the Royal authority with the Parliament is now establish'd upon a firmer basis than ever : Even the new Loan, which was at first so obnoxious, now fills gradually,

the amount of the sums already subscribed is not known with any certainty: Some say only 55 millions, but the friends of Government assert that eighty millions have been paid in. Matters are indeed far from being settled as to the other Parliaments but the present calm that has taken place so near to the seat of Government gives time for measures to be adopted which may dispose the Provincial Parliaments to conduct themselves with less opposition to the King's will.

On Thursday last the Parliament met to agree upon offering their thanks to His Majesty for the assurances His Majesty had been pleased to give that the *Etats Généraux* should be called. The Premier Président presented to the King a remonstrance against the Order that had been issued to forbid the attendance of the Peers in Parliament, praying leave, in the name of that Body, that they may be allowed to take their seats as usual.

His Majesty received the Deputation at Versailles, but His answer went no farther than to confirm His intention of assembling the *Etats Généraux* in 1791.

On Monday last *des très humbles supplications* were carried up to the King at Versailles, intreating His Majesty, in stronger terms than had been made use of in the first address, to restore the Duc d'Orleans, and the two exiled Magistrates, to the Parliament.

The King's answer, as on the former occasion, was strongly expressive of His dissatisfaction at the interference of the Parliament in matters upon which His authority alone had a right to decide: His Majesty said, however, that if His orders had been disobeyed and that the Persons, whom He had thought proper to remove from His Parliament had been treated with any improper severity, or that the Place of their detention should be found to be unwholesome (such a complaint having been made in the supplications) He should punish those who had not abided by the Letter of His commands, and would take care that the Exiles should not be exposed to any sufferance or hardship that is repugnant to the laws of humanity and His Royal tenderness. The King said that He had already made known His pleasure concerning the Duc d'Orleans.

Yesterday (the 28th) the Parliament, according to adjournment, met again upon the Edict for the *Etat civil des Protestans*—(this Edict is said to allow the Protestants to possess Estates in the Kingdom) and after some deliberation, it was unanimously agreed that that question could not be brought regularly before them until the Peers of Parliament were allowed to take their seats and have their share in the debate.

The Protestants are to be allowed to marry in the presence of the Curates, or of the Judges of the different Parishes and Districts in which they reside, and their Banns are to be published by the Curates, or, after the Mass, by the Greffier. The Certificates of the Births of Protestant Children are to be drawn up by the Curates or by the Judges: Burial-places will be allowed and they may be publicly interred....

86 DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
29 Nov. 1787.

... By a Letter from Sr. R.M. Keith dated the 14th of this Month that Minister informs me that he has good reason for thinking that the Emperor will very soon act offensively against the Ottoman Porte, as principal in the war, and Sr. Robert seems to expect that His Imperial Majesty will set out from Vienna, accompanyed by the Maréchal de Lasey, for Hungary in order to strike some decisive blow before the winter sets in.

I cannot but think that such a step of His Imperial Majesty will create much uneasiness here, and was this Country less embarrass'd than it now is, some measures would undoubtedly be taken to save the Turks from the danger which seems to threaten their existence in Europe. I have already observed to your Lordship in a former Despatch that the Levant Trade is an object to this Country of sixty millions annually....

87 DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
6 Dec. 1787.

Nothing has been done by the Parliament since their remonstrance to the King praying His Majesty's permission for the Peers

to resume their Seats in order to take their share in the new regulations to be adopted in favor of the Protestants : to which request no answer has yet been given. The Parliament is however to sit to-morrow upon the Edict concerning the Protestants, and it is expected that the King or His Brothers will be present for the purpose of having the said Edict register'd in due form.

88 DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
13 Dec. 1787.

On Friday last, the 7th, the Parliament met according to adjournment, neither the King nor His Brothers being present as was expected, to consider of the Edict relating to the Protestants, the principle of which was opposed with warmth by the Archbishop of Paris (Juigné) in a speech of some length, and it was finally resolved that the further consideration of this Edict should be referred to a Committee, for which thirty-five Members were accordingly chosen, whose report is to be made to the Parliament to-morrow.

This Edict has met with more opposition than was at first expected, and if the Committee shall have found it expedient to make any material alteration in the plan that was originally proposed, the advantages will be so trifling to those whom it was intended to favor that very little benefit will be obtained by it.

Some devout Persons have been industriously attempting to set the Public against the principle of toleration : among others La Maréchalle de Noailles, who is particularly distinguished for her strict attention to the duties of her religion :—This Lady some days ago sent her Coach from St. Germains, where she chiefly resides, to Paris, and had instructed her servants to distribute a late publication of her's upon the dangerous tenets, as she denominates them, of the protestant religion, to all the Curates of the several Parishes in Paris, exhorting them at the same time to apprise their congregations of the danger that awaited the established religion of France, by the introduction of protestantism : the Carriage however being stopped by the Custom-house Officers at the gates of Paris and the parcel, containing at least six hundred

of these pamphlets, being found, they were all seized and a report was made of them to the Lieutenant de Police, who ordered that they should be detained, and gave notice thereof to the Secretary of State from whom Madame la Maréchalle has received so severe a reprimand for her imprudent and ill-timed zeal that she will hardly venture again to interfere in a measure which is expected to produce such important advantages to His Most Christian Majesty's Dominions....

As one of the objects in establishing the Provincial Assemblies was that each Province should tax itself in proportion to its riches and produce, the Provinces of Burgundy and Lower Normandy, having concluded their deliberation upon that matter, have agreed to pay annually not much less than a third more than they have hitherto furnished, and it is computed that, if every Province should be able to offer an equal increase, His Majesty's yearly revenue would by this means be raised eighty millions of livres Tournois : but since it is well known that some of the Provinces are too poor to admit of any addition to their present burthens it is calculated that the increase may fairly be stated at fifty millions. It is worthy of observation that these new arrangements, so advantageous to Government, were suggested by M. de Calonne a short time before he was dismissed His Most Christian Majesty's Councils....

P.S. I have just received and send your Lordship the two inclosed Representations, by which it appears (for it had not otherwise transpired) that the Peers had obtained His Majesty's permission to resume their seats in the Parliament on the 7th Inst.

89 Dorset to Carmarthen, 13 Dec. 1787.

Notwithstanding that the late accounts from Vienna seem to threaten a vigorous prosecution of war against the Turks, it is certain that this Court has made such overtures to His Imperial Majesty as may induce him to defer at least taking an active part against the Porte 'till the Spring, against which time the French Minister flatters himself that the Divan may be brought to listen to

terms of accomodation with Russia, but upon what this hope is founded I have not been able to discover, tho' there can be no doubt that the Minister is very sanguine in the measures he is now pursuing to that end.

I have heard from no despicable authority that General Washington lately sent over to this Court a plan of operations for America in conjunction with France on the expectation of a rupture taking place with Great Britain : it is imagined that Canada was the object of this plan :—Whether or not there be any truth in this intelligence I shall use my best endeavors to find out, since it may be essential for His Majesty's Service to ascertain what are the real sentiments of the Americans at this time in order to frustrate any treacherous designs they may be disposed to put into practice against England whenever a fair opportunity for that purpose shall present itself.

P.S. Subscriptions to the new Loan come in very slowly, and the Archbishop certainly does *not* gain ground in the public estimation.

90 DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
20 Dec. 1787.

... The Provincial Assemblies in the neighbourhood of the Capital have finished their sittings :—that of the Isle of France, at which the Duc de Chatelét presided, is just closed : the addition to be paid by that Province into the King's Coffers is 300,000 livres Tournois ; besides which several abuses are corrected. The advantages likely to be produced by these Assemblies may be very great, not only in the relief they will afford to the poorer class of People from the oppression exercised by the lower sort of the collectors of the Revenue, and likewise the improvement of the public roads, but they will also in a manner force Persons of property to become Men of business, and thereby teach them to feel their own consequence independent of the support and favor of the Crown. The most sanguine of the young Nobility consider these Assemblies as much more favorable to the cause of National liberty than they do the fruitless obstinacy and ill-timed resistance

of the Parliament in refusing to register new Taxes at a moment when the Nation was in the greatest distress for want of money.

The uncommon activity with which Spain carried on Her naval preparations on the late occasion, and that Her Fleet is at present in a better condition than it had been in for some time before, are circumstances which cannot be unknown to your Lordship and the rest of His Majesty's Ministers ; I have therefore only to observe that the friendship and connection which subsists between M. de Montmorin and the Comte Florida Blanca cannot fail to strengthen in a still greater degree the union of the two Countries, and though I am persuaded that nothing *hostile* is at present designed against England by the House of Bourbon, it may be prudent for Great Britain to keep a watchfull eye over so formidable a Power.

I have endeavored to learn the truth of a piece of intelligence which I communicated to your Lordship in my Despatch No. 80, relative to a plan of operations said to have been sent to this Court by General Washington ; but neither the Minister for Foreign Affairs, nor any other Person that I have met with, who would probably have been acquainted with such a proposition, has seemed to have any knowledge or idea of such a plan having been communicated or even thought of.

91 DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
27 Dec. 1787.

... The Capitain Pacha, who is returned to Constantinople, has approved of all the measures of the Grand Vizier in the declaration and prosecution of the War against Russia.

The Pacha continues to enjoy the same degree of favour from the Grand Signor which he has always experienced from him. The Divan seems disposed to reject every overture for Peace made by France, and indeed at present, while the minds of the People are in so great a fermentation, the Ministers of the Porte dare not listen to any proposals of accomodation. His Imperial Majesty is inclined to admit of pacific measures but at the same time will not recede from the engagement he is under of assisting Russia. The most able experienced naval officer in the Turkish Service who

commanded the Fleet in the Black Sea has been put to death by order of the Grand Vizier for not having, as is pretended, done his utmost to destroy the Enemy's Fleet when lying before Oczakow.

92 DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
27 Dec. 1787.

...We happen to have had separate conferences with him (M. de Montmorin); but we find, on comparing the result, that there was not any material variation in the language which he thought proper to hold. He appeared earnest and anxious respecting the general object of the discussion; he acknowledged (even warmly) the expediency, if possible of bringing the two Courts to an honourable and explicit understanding upon all points which at present may be subjects of jealousy and uneasiness, or which may be likely to become so. He denied too that France has any views whatever in India, which can tend to interrupt the harmony between the two Countries; or that there is any idea of resuming what we suppose to have been the system lately pursued by the Court in Holland.

But in other respects we did not feel ourselves prepared or authorized to enter into any specific statement of mutual explanations; and it was not difficult to perceive that the French Minister rather felt that we were without any definite plan, and was perhaps himself in the same predicament; or that he had no disposition to risque particular Propositions unless we should show an equal promptitude on our part to do the same. In regard to the conduct which your Lordship suspects this Court to have lately adopted relative to the Affairs of Turkey and which your Lordship considers as contrary to the Line of Policy which the French Minister holds out on this subject, in discussing with him the contents of your Lordship's Despatch we thought it right to draw his attention to this point; He observed that, if such a suspicion was grounded on the connection between this Country and the two Imperial Courts, undoubtedly there is a connection with the Court of Vienna which has subsisted with little interruption since 1756, and with that of

Petersbourg since the late Treaty of Commerce : and that it was just and becoming in France to cultivate those connections, but that he had used them only to recommend Peace:—and, unless we could go farther and state something more than general suspicion, it was not in his power to give us more than a general answer.

He accompanied this with expressions of regret that England continues so much disposed to credit every injurious suspicion respecting France that is presented to Her. As we are not apprized of the authenticated reports to which your Lordship alludes we did not urge the matter further. If anything new should occur on the subject of this Letter, we shall not fail to transmit it to your Lordship.

93 DORSET TO CARMARTHEN,
31 Dec. 1787.

... A Deputation from the Parliament having been admitted into His Majesty's presence last Thursday, His Majesty returned an answer to the supplications made to Him, in favor of their Exiled Members, to the following effect :—

Qu'au lieu de réclamer ma justice vous auriez du intéresser mes bontes : au surplus Je vous ai déjà fait connoître mes intentions."

This answer was, on the following day, communicated to the Parliament assembled, (the Princes of the Blood and Peers being present) which after a short sitting adjourned to that day se'ennight. There still continues to be a variety of opinions respecting the fate of the Edict relating to the Protestants, for the final decision of which the day is not yet fixed...

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